



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

50696.

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.

- MEMOIRS OF THE HOUSE OF ORLEANS. By W. COOKE TAYLOR, LL.D. 3 vols., 8vo., 42s.
- THE COURT AND REIGN OF FRANCIS THE FIRST, KING OF FRANCE, By Miss PARDOE. 2 vols., 8vo., 36s.
- LIFE OF H.R.H. EDWARD, DUKE OF KENT. By the Rev. FRANK NEAVE, M.A. 1 vol., 8vo., 14s.
- DOCTOR JOHNSON: HIS RELIGIOUS LIFE AND HIS DEATH. By the AUTHOR OF 'DR. HOOKWELL.' 1 vol., post 8vo., 12s.
- EARTH AND MAN: LECTURES ON COMPARATIVE PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY. By ARNOLD GUYOT. 1 vol., post 8vo., 5s.
- THE PHANTOM WORLD; OR, THE PHILOSOPHY OF SPIRITS, APPARITIONS, &c. By AUGUSTINE CALMET. EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES, by the Rev. HENRY CHRISTMAS, M.A., F.R.S. 2 vols., post 8vo., 21s.
- LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE OF ADMIRAL SIR WM. SYDNEY SMITH, G.C.B. By JOHN BARROW, Esq., F.R.S. 2 vols., 8vo., 28s.
- THE LETTERS OF PHILIP DORMER STANHOPE, EARL OF CHESTERFIELD. EDITED, WITH NOTES, by LORD MAHON. 4 vols., 8vo., 24s.
- THE HISTORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. By M. A. THIERS. TRANSLATED, WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS, by F. SHOBERL. 5 vols., 8vo., 25s.
- THE LIBERTY OF ROME: A HISTORY, WITH AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE LIBERTY OF ANCIENT NATIONS. By SAMUEL ELIOT. 2 vols., 8vo., 28s.
- THE HISTORY OF PETER THE CRUEL, KING OF CASTILE AND LEON. By PROSPER MERIMEE. 2 vols., post 8vo., 16s.
- MEMOIRS AND ESSAYS ILLUSTRATIVE OF ART, LITERATURE, AND SOCIAL MORALS. By MRS. JAMESON. 1 vol., post 8vo., 10s. 6d.
- THE HISTORY OF THE REIGN OF FERDINAND AND ISABELLA THE CATHOLIC OF SPAIN. By W. H. PRESCOTT. Sixth Edition. 3 vols., crown 8vo., 18s.; or in 3 vols., 8vo., 42s.
- HISTORY OF THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO, WITH THE LIFE OF THE CONQUEROR, HERNANDO CORTES. By W. H. PRESCOTT. Fifth Edition. 3 vols., crown 8vo., 18s.; or in 2 vols., 8vo., 32s.
- BIOGRAPHICAL AND LITERARY ESSAYS. By W. H. PRESCOTT. 8vo., 14s.
- HISTORY OF THE CONQUEST OF PERU. By W. H. PRESCOTT. Fourth Edition. 3 vols., crown 8vo., 18s.; or in 2 vols., 8vo., 32s.
- MEMOIRS OF PRINCE RUPERT AND THE CAVALIERS. By ELIOT WARBURTON. Numerous fine Portraits. 3 vols., 8vo., 42s.
- THE CONQUEST OF CANADA. By the Author of "Hochelaga." 2

By ROBERT BELL. 4 vols.,

FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THEIR
vols., 8vo., 45s.

FRANCE IN THE SEVENTEENTH
Third Edition. 3 vols., 8vo., 42s.

BODLEIAN LIBRARY

OXFORD

TON STREET.



HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.

- MEMOIRS OF THE REIGNS OF EDWARD VI. AND MARY. By PATRICK FRASER TYTLER. 2 vols., 8vo., 24s.
- NAVAL HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN, WITH A CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY TO THE PRESENT TIME. By W. JAMES. 6 vols., 8vo., 54s.
- MEMOIRS OF THE REIGN OF GEORGE THE THIRD. By HORATIO, LORD ORFORD. Edited, with Notes, by Sir DENIS LE MARCHANT, Bart. 4 vols., 8vo., 56s.
- BENTLEY'S COLLECTIVE EDITION OF THE LETTERS OF HORACE WALPOLE. 6 vols., 63s.
- LETTERS TO SIR HORACE MANN. By HORACE WALPOLE. Second Series. 4 vols., 8vo., 56s.
- CHARACTERISTIC SKETCHES OF ENGLISH SOCIETY, POLITICS, AND LITERATURE, COMPRISED IN A SERIES OF LETTERS TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY. By HORACE WALPOLE. Edited by the Right Hon. R. VERNON SMITH, M.P. 2 vols., 8vo., 30s.
- MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF ENGLAND DURING THE REIGN OF THE STUARTS. By J. HENEAGE JESSE. 4 vols., 8vo., 56s.
- MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF ENGLAND UNDER THE HOUSES OF NASSAU AND HANOVER. By J. HENEAGE JESSE. 3 vols., 8vo., 42s.
- MEMOIRS OF THE CHEVALIER AND PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD. By J. HENEAGE JESSE. 2 vols., 8vo., 28s.
- MEMOIRS OF EXTRAORDINARY POPULAR DELUSIONS. By CHARLES MACKAY, LL.D. 3 vols., 8vo., 42s.
- MEMOIRS OF KING HENRY V. By J. E. TYLER, B.D. 2 vols., 8vo., 21s.
- A HISTORY OF HIS OWN TIME; COMPRISING MEMOIRS OF THE COURTS OF ELIZABETH AND JAMES I. By DR. GOODMAN, BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER. Edited by J. S. BREWER, M.A. 2 vols., 8vo., 18s.
- ILLUSTRATIONS OF ENGLISH HISTORY IN A NEW SERIES OF LETTERS; NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINAL MSS. By Sir HENRY ELLIS. 4 vols., post 8vo., 24s.
- MEMOIRS OF THE TWO REBELLIONS IN SCOTLAND IN 1715 AND 1745; OR THE ADHERENTS OF THE STUARTS. By Mrs. THOMSON. 3 vols., 8vo., 42s.
- AN ACCOUNT OF THE KINGDOM OF CAUBUL AND ITS DEPENDENCIES IN PERSIA, TARTARY, AND INDIA. By the Right Honourable MOUNTSTUART ELPHINSTONE. 2 vols., 8vo., 28s.
- A CENTURY OF CARICATURES; OR, ENGLAND UNDER THE HOUSE OF HANOVER. By THOMAS WRIGHT. 2 vols., 8vo., 30s.
- SOCIAL LIFE IN ENGLAND AND FRANCE. By Miss BERRY. 2 vols., small 8vo., 21s.
- DIARIES AND CORRESPONDENCE OF JAMES HARRIS, FIRST EARL OF MALMESBURY. Edited by his Grandson. 4 vols., 8vo., 60s.
- MEMOIRS OF THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON; TO WHICH ARE NOW ADDED A HISTORY OF THE HUNDRED DAYS, OF THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO, AND OF NAPOLEON'S EXILE AND DEATH AT ST. HELENA. By M. BOURBONNE. Numerous Portraits. 4 vols., 8vo., 30s.
- THE LIFE AND REMAINS OF THEODORE HOOK. By the Rev. R. D. BARNHAM. Second Edition. 2 vols., post 8vo., 21s.

BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

THE LADDER OF GOLD.

An English Story.

BY ROBERT BELL,

AUTHOR OF "WAYSIDE PICTURES THROUGH FRANCE, BELGIUM,
AND HOLLAND," &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1850.

WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.



CONTENTS OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

A BOW LONG BENT AT LAST WAXETH WEAK.

CHAPTER I.

THE PANIC	3
---------------------	---

CHAPTER II.

THE KNIGHTS OF WHITECROSS	33
-------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

VERY SHORT, BUT VERY IMPORTANT TO THE PEOPLE CONCERNED IN IT	59
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH THE GREEN WILLOW SHOWS SYMPTOMS OF TURNING YELLOW	67
--	----

CHAPTER V.

AN EXPLOSION	87
------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI.

THE LOVER AND THE HUSBAND	126
-------------------------------------	-----

BOOK THE SIXTH.

AS YOU SOW, YOU MUST REAP.

CHAPTER I.

CONTAINING CONFIDENTIAL DISCLOSURES	145
---	-----

CHAPTER II.

FULL OF BELUCOSE MATTER	160
-----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER III.

EXPLANATIONS	189
------------------------	-----

CHAPTER IV.

CHALK FARM	211
----------------------	-----

CHAPTER V.

THE DEATHBED SECRET	225
-------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER VI.

THE RETURN AFTER THE DUEL	251
-------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER VII.

THE DUELLO SEEN FROM DIFFERENT POINTS OF SIGHT	272
--	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LAST TRIAL	290
--------------------------	-----

POSTSCRIPT	316
----------------------	-----

BOOK THE FIFTH.

A BOW LONG BENT AT LAST WAXETH WEAK.

VOL. III.

B

THE LADDER OF GOLD.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE PANIC.

AT this critical point of our history we feel it incumbent upon us, for the satisfaction of certain grave doubts and speculations, to part company for a few minutes from the personages who figure in it, in order that we may have a little private conference with an individual who, just now, is of more concern to us than any body else—we mean the Reader.

That individual, we have been informed (by a little bird that collects private opinions for us), was thrown into a fit of indignation in the last chapter,

at the conclusion of which he flung down the book, declaring that all the interest was at an end the moment Margaret Rawlings married Lord Charles Eton. What could happen after that in which a novel-reader could be expected to feel any sympathy? The young lady was married, and made wretched for life, and there was an end of her. Romance is over, and vegetation begins, when people marry. Hence it is that the established and legitimate law of novels is to reserve the matrimonial incidents for the consummation of the story. You may do anything else you please with your characters during the course of the plot—hang or assassinate them, or let them run away with other people's wives—but you must not marry them till the last page. The clergyman in a novel may be regarded as the undertaker of the story, and when he makes his appearance, the play is played out, and nothing more remains to be said or done but to bury the dead.

We hold your opinions, O experienced Reader, in implicit respect. You ought to be a much better judge of novels than we are—you, for whose delectation they are written, and who have read so many; and we who have written none, and whose reading,

in comparison with yours, is not to be mentioned. It is, therefore, with much humility, as you may believe, that we venture to enter our protest, respectfully but firmly, against the doctrine you have just laid down.

A novel is a picture of real life, and the test of its merit is the fidelity of the likeness. But as there are such things as faithful portraits which are nevertheless so unskilfully manipulated as to make very bad pictures, so there have been novels presenting undeniable representations of actual life, yet put together so clumsily as to make very dreary and unreadable books. It is evident, therefore, that there is something more than truthfulness of portraiture necessary to the construction of a good novel; and that fidelity without Art is not sufficient to secure the applause of the public.

Now the province of Art is not confined to the treatment of the materials—it also embraces the choice of them. Many works, admirable for the exhibition of executive power, have failed of success, from infelicity of judgment in the selection of subjects. To indicate the subjects best adapted to the purposes of a novel would carry us out of our way; it is enough to say that they are such only as are

reconcilable with general experience. Exceptional cases may be true as facts, but they are false as truths. This is no paradox, indulgent Reader, although we cannot wait to discuss it now.

Over the whole realm of human passions and social conventions Art levies contributions. Every incident enclosed within the table of Births, Marriages, and Deaths, is at her disposal. The whole life of man, beginning in the cradle, passing through the church, and ending in the grave, is tributary to her objects. Upon what principle of reason or taste, then, do you require that she should stop short in the middle? The sculptor who rears the monumental testament of heroes, inscribes upon its base the prominent scenes of their glory, conducting the imagination through an historical procession that finally vanishes in the tomb. The painter who undertakes to reflect the vicissitudes of humanity runs the whole course of life—see, for example, Hogarth, and the chambers of Versailles. Why should the novelist be restricted to that portion of existence which elapses before people can be said to have begun the world?

No interest after marriage? No interest in married women? Must we blot out Desdemona, Imo-

gen, and Amelia? But we will not argue the question upon instances, or we might shock the sensibilities of all ardent supporters of our dearly beloved circulating libraries by citing the authority of Shakspeare and Fielding, and many others whose practices in such matters are entitled to pass into edicts. We rest upon the interest which most people after marriage may be rationally supposed to take in their own lives. If it be true that they feel no longer any charm in existence, or any necessity to exist—if emotion, hope, ambition, the action and re-action of social influences be extinguished in them the moment they take the marriage vow—if their career be ended the instant they write their names in the register—if they acknowledge themselves to be then and there divested of their hearts and heads, and denuded of civil importance and moral weight, of course we must admit that they have no business to figure in a novel, and that the old “tye-wig system” ought to be implicitly adhered to, of ending with a ring of bells, as they used to end the cheerful antique comedy (which, by the way, had as many married as unmarried lovers in it) with a dance. But as a considerable proportion of the ladies and gentlemen who constitute the population

of the world, happen to have committed wedlock, and as, we suspect, they would be rather unwilling to agree with you, O Reader, that they are thereby disabled from taking a share in the acting charade of human life, we must maintain the legitimate right of Art to follow up the journey of character and passion on the great highway as far beyond the half-way house of matrimony as her behests may require.

In this, no doubt, as in all other parts of her vocation, Art is responsible for her choice of topics ; and all the more responsible for choosing to pursue her narrative into scenes which are not usually considered very productive of popular interest. She must have ample justification for departing from the ordinary usage ; and if she ventures upon the hazardous step of marrying people in the middle of a book, she must be prepared to show that it is essential to the completeness of her design, and that the disappointing effect of the incident upon the nerves of youthful enthusiasts has an adequate compensation in the crowning purpose of the story.

Having put these considerations as succinctly before you as we could, objective Reader, and endeavoured to vindicate the privileges of Art on a point which, for reasons that you are as yet ignorant of, gives us

more uneasiness than it can possibly give you, we will proceed forthwith to gather up the dropped threads of our narrative.

We left Mr. Costigan diving mysteriously into dark lanes and obscure alleys, in the dusk of the evenings, and carefully avoiding the principal thoroughfares. It was not without good reason he kept out of the way. Writs, and rumours of writs, were falling as thick as hail over the kingdom; and, from the hour the panic set in, every individual who had anything to do with railroads, and who happened at the same time to have anything to lose, was struck with consternation. Mr. Costigan had nothing to lose but his liberty; and he prized it accordingly.

The crash was as instantaneous as the collapse of a balloon, when, after ascending gaily into the clouds, to the admiration of gaping multitudes, it suddenly discovers a rent—the gas escapes, and the gaudy structure comes tumbling to the earth. It is of little consequence whether that fatal rent was made by a bolt launched from the hand of the Thunderer, in Printing-house-square, or by the inevitable action of other influences; for certain it is, that the aforesaid balloon, being composed of remarkably flimsy materials, must have burst at last, under any circum-

stances; but history will justly ascribe to the Thunderer the glory of having anticipated its fall, and brought it down, while it was yet riding at a prodigious altitude in apparent security.

Sir Peter Jinks had the satisfaction of seeing the results he had anticipated fulfilled to the letter. Very clearly, too, was confirmed to him what he had all along believed to be the source of the mischief. The mass of the speculators were ruined; and a few crafty hands had amassed enormous wealth. The history and moral of the bubble were dissected under his eyes.

While thousands of unlucky dupes were skulking in holes and corners, selling off whatever they could turn into money, throwing up their employments, and absconding from indefinite responsibilities, such men as Rawlings were quietly reposing on the profits of popular credulity and infatuation. In Sir Peter's estimation, Rawlings was the chief delinquent. To his boldness and subtlety he attributed the invention of a system of gigantic swindling in the share-market, by which the bulk of the public were grievously defrauded; and he resolved to bring the whole subject under the consideration of the House of Commons. His final object was to make an example

of Rawlings; to drag him before a Parliamentary tribunal; strip him of the fortune he had accumulated; and hunt him back, branded and degraded, into the obscurity from which he sprang.

Sir Peter was a vindictively honest man. Not content with the observance of the strictest integrity in his own transactions, he held it to be a public duty to make a crusade against frauds of all kinds, especially when they took a commercial shape. His activity in this direction was notorious. It was wonderful how he ferreted out fraudulent joint-stock companies, and gangs of plausible rogues, who, under the disguise of mercantile firms, spread a network of robbery over the face of the country. A most useful man was Sir Peter in his generation; although his utility was of a class that frequently brought him into much personal odium and hatred.

Mr. Rawlings met the menaced exposure, of which Sir Peter made no secret, with contemptuous indifference. Railways, in every stage of existence—from the scheme that was nipped in the bud, to the project that had already lodged its plans and collected its deposits—were falling in wrecks about him; while others, in full operation, whose shares

had hitherto maintained a high premium, suddenly went down to an alarming discount; but Mr. Rawlings preserved unmoved the same oracular composure that had marked his conduct all throughout. No man could extract from him even an opinion upon what Mr. Trumbull called the "eternal smash;" and the only criticism he ever condescended upon was an ironical smile when people expressed their dismay at these occurrences.

But the affair was not regarded with similar *non-chalance* by his son-in-law. No man felt more keenly than Lord Charles Eton those imputations upon character which break out in slanderous inuendoes and personal evasions in society. It was the work of his life to build up an unspotted reputation for himself; and he was so sensitive to the approach of contumely, that he shrank with alarm from the remotest suspicion that threatened to compromise the credit of any person with whom he was connected. He was so jealous of his honour in the eyes of the world, that he considered even a collateral stain as a reflected disgrace on his own name. These punctilious notions had descended to him from his uncle, and were refined to the utmost excess by the young

statesman, who looked to external proprieties and an unblemished fame as the safe guarantees of success in public life.

The young couple took up their town residence in Lord William Eton's great house in Portman-square. Two extensive suites of apartments were reserved for their use; Lord William, who could not conquer his repugnance to the new connexion, and who never could prevail upon himself to receive Margaret Rawlings as a second Grace Hunsdon, carefully abstaining from any interference in their domestic arrangements. He breakfasted in his own room, and spent the day in his club, and rarely dined with his nephew except upon special occasions; so that, although they lived in the same house, their intercourse fell off considerably after the marriage. Lord William still felt the same interest, however, in the career of his nephew, and, as became his high breeding, treated the lady with distinguished courtesy whenever they met.

Lord Charles was so constantly engaged that Margaret was left much alone. Solitude was by no means unwelcome to her, and the only society she cared to indulge was that of her mother and sister,

who hardly suffered a day to pass without seeing her either at her house or their own. At first, Lord Charles was very indulgent about these visits; but his manner underwent a marked change when the panic set in, and aspersions of dishonesty began to be cast upon Mr. Rawlings.

They were seated at breakfast one morning just at the time when the newspapers were filled with disastrous intelligence about the railway crash, and reports of public meetings at which the great projector and millionaire was freely denounced by hosts of bubbled shareholders.

Lord Charles was reading the *Times*, and found matter in it which, every now and then, made him knit his eyebrows with an expression of strong indignation.

"When were you at Park-lane, Margaret?" he inquired.

"Yesterday," replied Margaret.

"Well—and when are you to see them again?"

"I promised to dine there to-day, Charles, as you said you would be engaged at the House."

His lordship folded back the paper with an angry motion of his hand. There was a pause of a few minutes.

"Do you know what your father intends to do in these disgraceful railway affairs?"

"Indeed, I know nothing about them. But I hope you do not think any disgrace attaches to him."

"Think? I think, Margaret, that when a man suffers degrading insinuations to go abroad, and takes no trouble to refute them, it will be difficult to persuade the world that he is as free from blame as his friends would wish to believe."

"His friends ought to believe nothing to his disadvantage. We, at least, Charles, are bound to vindicate him against such calumnies."

"You are wrong, Margaret. It is he who owes that obligation to us. If he is indifferent to character for his own sake, he ought to be more scrupulous on our account. But I am afraid his notions on that subject are rather lax."

"Lord Charles!" exclaimed Margaret, colouring deeply, and drawing herself up reproachfully. There was a look of severity in his face she had never seen there before.

"I have no wish to wound your feelings," he observed, coldly; "you are ignorant of these things, of course, and it is natural you should try to find ex-

cuses for him; but considering, Lady Charles, the change in your position, I am surprised you are not more eager to prevent an exposure which must seriously compromise me as a public man. I must say—and I say it reluctantly—that when I connected myself with your family I had no suspicion that your father had acquired his wealth by means which would not bear the strictest investigation.”

“And who asserts that he acquired it by any other means?” demanded Margaret.

“Well—I hope it may turn out so. But, day after day, opprobrious charges are heaped upon him in the newspapers, and he doesn’t take the slightest notice of them. If he persists in this course—which is tantamount to an admission of their truth—he will compel me to relieve my own reputation from the animadversions his conduct is calculated to draw upon me.”

“Your reputation, Lord Charles? How can it affect your reputation?”

“Simply,” returned Lord Charles, in a tone of grave asperity, “that the world will say I received a large fortune with my wife which was not very creditably obtained. He may be indifferent to such

accusations—I am not. My name descends to me unsullied, and no taint shall fall upon it that I can avert—be the cost or sacrifice what it may.”

The bitterness and *hauteur* with which these words were uttered—the reserved resolution that lurked behind them—and the pride of birth which now for the first time escaped from the lips of her husband, threw a new light upon his character and Margaret’s position. The delicacy and respect with which he had hitherto treated her, had effectually obliterated the distinction of rank, and made her feel perfectly at ease in the enjoyment of her new honours. The wide difference between the daughter of a man of obscure origin, who at that moment was suspected of dishonesty in his dealings, and the descendant of an ancient house, who shrank from the degradation of his plebeian alliance, was now painfully apparent to her. Of all men, she believed Lord Charles to be the most generous upon points of feeling, and the last to be actuated by personal considerations. His temper was so calm and equable, he was always so ready to consult her inclinations, and had shown so much regard for her family, that she had the greatest confidence in the justice and kindness of his nature. She believed him incapable

of meanness or selfishness; she even looked up to him as a model of integrity and high-mindedness, so completely had he succeeded in impressing her before marriage with those qualities which were most likely to conciliate her good opinion. But that flattering ideal, to which she had trusted for whatever negative repose her married life might yield, vanished in this brief conversation. He was no longer the same Lord Charles—latent and repulsive elements of character had suddenly disclosed themselves—and the discovery shocked and humiliated her.

She was prevented from making any reply to his last observations by a hasty tap at the door, which was almost instantly followed by the entrance of Lord William Eton. His appearance surprised them both, and the flurried manner in which he advanced and seated himself at the table, showed that some unusual circumstance had occasioned his visit. After a formal "Good morning," he turned to his nephew.

"Have you had any communication from Sir Peter Jinks?"

"None."

"That's not very courteous, as I happen to know that he is going about telling all the rest of the

world his intentions respecting your — father-in-law."

" Mr. Rawlings? What intentions?"

" Why, it is the common talk of the clubs. He did me the favour to apprise me of it last night; and was polite enough to say that as it might touch a member of my family, he couldn't think of proceeding in it without giving me a friendly hint beforehand. It is something new, Charles, in our family to be warned in this way of an impending disgrace."

" Disgrace, my lord?"

" Yes, Charles, disgrace. It seems that Sir Peter, who takes charge of all public nuisances and delinquencies, has resolved to move for a committee in the House of Commons to inquire into the railway swindles, with a particular view to the career of Mr. Rawlings. The consequences, I suspect, will not be very agreeable to the feelings of honourable people who happen to be connected with him. I beg pardon, Lady Charles, for speaking so unreservedly about your father; but a gentleman who holds his own reputation in such remarkable contempt, cannot expect much consideration from others."

" Yet others might show a little more considera-

tion for me," said Margaret; "he is my father, and you must allow me to say that I am convinced he will justify himself. When he does, I hope you will repair the wrong you have done him."

"When he does, Lady Charles," returned his lordship, with a satirical smile, "depend upon it, I will make ample reparation; but until he does, I hope you will forgive me for continuing to think that he does not care a rush for my opinion or anybody else's. I am sorry to be obliged to say this to *you*—of course it must be very distressing to you—no doubt—I really feel concerned for you—but the matter cannot be cushioned; and my nephew has a name to maintain, Lady Charles, for which he is responsible to his family and his country."

"Why not at once see my father on the subject?" demanded Margaret.

"That would appear to be the obvious course, certainly," observed Lord Charles, "but I am afraid it would be useless. Mr. Rawlings admits no man to his confidence."

"I am sure, Charles, you have no reason to say so. At all events, make the experiment; go frankly to him, and tell him exactly what you apprehend. It would be more just and honourable than to con-

demn him upon newspaper slanders. I am satisfied that he will justify himself."

She uttered this somewhat proudly. Her spirit was wrung. She felt the disadvantage at which she was placed in the presence of her patrician uncle-in-law, who, on this occasion, exhibited an unusual air of conscious nobility. The tone of patronage and superiority with which he apologised to her for defaming her father, hurt her more than his words, and brought out into direct antagonism those conventional differences which a marriage without love or sympathy renders so salient and galling. A wide gulf seemed to open between her and her husband's family—she felt as if she didn't belong to them, as if she had no right to be there, standing between them and the assertion of their untarnished lineage; and the revulsion of feeling awakened the daughter rather than the wife in her heart. Little cause as she had to turn to her father with affection, he was more to her now than her husband.

As she spoke, the door abruptly opened, and Mr. Rawlings came in.

"Ah! father!" exclaimed Margaret, "you are welcome. Gentlemen, I said he would justify him-

self. He is here to do it. Speak to them, father, openly, for my sake—for your own."

Lord William threw himself back sternly in his chair, and Lord Charles motioned Mr. Rawlings to be seated.

"What is it, child?" inquired Mr. Rawlings.

"There are charges—I don't know what—brought against you in the newspapers, and you do not notice them. Will you explain to my husband the reason of your silence. His uneasiness is reasonable, dear father, and I know you will put his mind at rest."

"His lordship is very obliging," said Mr. Rawlings, "to take so much interest in my affairs. But we cannot talk about business before a lady, you know;" and, handing his daughter quietly to the door, Mr. Rawlings returned to the table, and took the seat Lord Charles had indicated to him. "May I ask, gentlemen, what is the explanation you wish to have from me?" he inquired.

"I should have hoped," replied Lord William, "that your own sense of what is due to my nephew, might have pointed out to you the propriety of anticipating that question."

"If I had consulted my own sense of what is due

to your nephew, my lord," said Mr. Rawlings, "I shouldn't have taken the trouble to ask the question; for I really don't see how he is entitled to any explanation of matters that in no way concern him; but you see I am willing to hear what part of my life or conduct he thinks himself privileged to inquire into."

"You do not state the case quite fairly, Mr. Rawlings," said Lord Charles; "I have no right whatever to institute such an inquisition; but you must feel, that where grave insinuations to your discredit are circulated in clubs and newspapers, my connexion with your family must make me anxious to have them investigated and rebutted."

"Then you consider it necessary, because you are connected with my family, that I should hunt up the slanders of clubs and newspapers, and refute them in detail? Is that your notion?"

"Yes, sir," interposed Lord William, "that is precisely his notion; and it is a notion, as you call it, which every man with the feelings of a gentleman must approve."

"Don't you think," returned Mr. Rawlings, dryly, "it would be as well to drop your feelings out of

the question, and look at matters of business as matters of business strictly?"

"That may answer on the Stock Exchange, Mr. Rawlings," observed Lord William; "but you should remember, that when you formed an alliance with a noble family, you came into a different atmosphere."

"I do remember it," said Mr. Rawlings; "and I also remember that the noble family were very eager to form an alliance with me. Which side do you imagine is the gainer by the connexion?"

"I dare say, looking at it in your way as a 'matter of business,' you are of opinion my nephew is the gainer. I will not commit such an outrage on good taste as to discuss the point with you. The question, sir, in which we are concerned, is to know whether you are prepared to free yourself from the imputations that are heaped upon you from all points of the compass—imputations, Mr. Rawlings, which, if they have a shadow of foundation in fact, can leave *us* no option as to the course we must pursue."

"You are at liberty, my lord, to pursue any course you think proper," replied Mr. Rawlings;

"and it may be satisfactory to you to be informed, that it is my intention to do the same. I have had some intercourse with noble families, and, upon the whole, I am not prepared to admit that, although they make a marvellous show of sensibility on the subject of honour, they are a whit more honourable than their neighbours."

"What do you mean by that observation, sir?" demanded Lord William, who had hitherto found some difficulty in restraining his choler; "do you presume to insinuate that any member of my family is obnoxious to the suspicion of dishonourable conduct?"

"I will answer that question, my lord, by another. Do you presume to insinuate that I have acted dishonourably?"

"I do not deal in insinuations," retorted his lordship; "I repeat openly the scandalous reports that are in everybody's mouth."

"Pray, is it out of tenderness to me you take such an extraordinary interest in my affairs?"

"The question is absurd," replied Lord William; "what are your affairs to me? You cannot suppose I should trouble myself about you or them, if my nephew had not married your daughter."

"Exactly so," returned Mr. Rawlings: "your anxiety proceeds from no consideration for me, but purely from motives affecting yourself and your family. Instead of affording me, as I had a right to expect, the advantage of your support, and showing the world that you discountenance these calumnies, you throw the whole weight of your influence into the other scale, to give them additional force and currency. This is what I have gained by my alliance with the very noble house of Westland."

"You must exempt me, Mr. Rawlings," said Lord Charles, "from this censure. I feel acutely the painful situation in which I am placed, but I have carefully avoided giving any opinion, one way or the other."

"Pooh! pooh! Charles," exclaimed Lord William, impatiently; "let him go on. Let us hear what he has to say."

"In good time, Lord William Eton," said Mr. Rawlings, fixing his eyes full upon his lordship's face. "And so," he continued, turning to Lord Charles, "you feel your own situation acutely, and take credit to yourself for allowing your wife's father to be maligned, without giving any opinion, one way or the other? Do you believe that is the way to mend

your situation, or to induce me to stir one step in the matter on your account? I am amazed, Lord Charles, that a man who is so keenly alive to his own interest, so shrewd, time-serving, and selfish, should act with such egregious folly."

"Mr. Rawlings—this language is offensive," cried Lord Charles.

"Indeed!" returned Mr. Rawlings; "then you should act with a little more policy, and be careful not to give occasion for offence. You have disappointed me, Lord Charles. I thought you had more tact—but you have chosen your side, and must take the consequences.—You wished to hear what I had to say, my lord. I beg you will listen to it. When your nephew proposed for my daughter, I wasn't given to understand that you had any objection to the match, nor did I consent to it, until it was, in the first instance, sanctioned by you."

"I never approved of the connexion," said Lord William.

"But you sanctioned it, for all that."

"Well—granted—I sanctioned it."

"You had no objection, on the part of your nephew, to receive with my daughter a sum of fifty thousand pounds, with a life interest in two thousand

a year. When that little arrangement was in course of negotiation, I was not apprised of any scruples you had about my reputation; nor did you exhibit any particular curiosity as to the sources from whence her fortune was derived."

"Why should I? I knew of nothing against your reputation then."

"And what do you know against it now? Can you pick out of the malicious rumours set afloat by a mob of disappointed speculators, who are turning round upon every man that happened to be more fortunate or sagacious than themselves, one definite charge? Not one. And upon these despicable inuendoes you assume the right of demanding explanations from me, and casting a stigma upon my name."

"Your name, Mr. Rawlings?" exclaimed Lord William; "really I must protest against being accused of having a design upon your name, for I have yet to learn that there is any special distinction attached to it."

"There is that distinction attached to it," replied Mr. Rawlings; "which has brought men of your class in troops about me, courting my favours like menial parasites. Your nephew was amongst the

foremost of them, when he was seeking to aggrandize himself by a marriage with my daughter, and now, at the first breath of slander, you are ready to repudiate the connexion."

"*I never had any connexion with you, sir,*" cried Lord William, in a tone of vehemence, "and I promise you I never will. Let my nephew answer for himself."

"I will answer for both. Your nobility enriches itself at the cost of my industry, and then, having got all it wanted, takes the earliest opportunity of taunting me with its insolent superiority. But the triumph is mine. I began the world without a shoe to my foot. I was treated with scorn, beaten, and buffeted like a beast of burden. I resolved to take my revenge on the tyranny of the world—and I have done it. My daughter—the daughter of the shoeless beggar—is Lady Charles Eton, your lordship's niece by marriage. You cannot evade that fact—she is amongst your countesses and honourables, and will look down hereafter from your picture gallery as proudly as the best of them. I have known what it was to want a crust of bread—I have starved by the road-side, and slept in fields and outhouses—what am I now? Will it humiliate your lordship, if I re-

mind you that my house can't contain the people of fashion that crowd about me? I dine and dance the aristocracy—there is no end to cringing and flattery—I am suffocated with incense—it is more oppressive than the drudgery I went through for a daily subsistence—and I have the pleasure of knowing that out of my substance your lordship's nephew is enabled to make that magnificent figure which your distinguished ancestors forgot to leave him the means of providing for. Tell me, then, which of us has the best right to set up an arrogant ascendancy over the other—you, who quarter yourselves on my fortune, or I, who stuff the cushions on which you stretch your dignity?"

As he spoke, his form seemed to dilate, his head was thrown back with an expression of scorn and grandeur, and the fire of concentrated passion flashed up through his features.

"You are an extraordinary man, Mr. Rawlings," exclaimed Lord William, drawing a long breath. "I suppose you must take what course you think best."

"It is my intention, Lord William," returned Rawlings, rising and taking up his hat; "and you must excuse me if I decline admitting you into my

counsel, having got on pretty well up to this time without your help. But, before I leave you, I have one word to say. If you fancy I value your connexion, you are mistaken. All the advantage it can ever be to me, I have gained already. I have paid a high price for it, but I don't repent my bargain. On your side, the case is widely different—it is for your benefit, not mine, that we should keep on good terms, and, although I have no great opinion of your discretion, I think you know your own interests too well not to see the necessity of changing your tone about these railway libels. You must discourage them. It won't answer the purpose for you to appear indifferent. Your policy is indignation. Surely you ought to be indignant for your own sakes," he added, in a sarcastic tone; "and if anybody wonders why I am not indignant, all you need say is, that I hold these slanders in too much contempt to be angry about them. I wish you good morning."

When he was gone, Lord William and Lord Charles turned a vacant and baffled look upon each other.

"An extraordinary man," ejaculated Lord William; "as deep as Satan!"

"Very extraordinary," echoed Lord Charles.

"I am afraid we shall get nothing by provoking him."

"I am afraid not."

"Better to leave him to himself, and see how it will end."

"Much better," returned Lord Charles.

CHAPTER II.

THE KNIGHTS OF WHITECROSS.

THERE was high excitement in the House, and in the lobbies and avenues leading to it, on the night when Sir Peter Jinks went down to move for his Committee of Inquiry. All the way up-stairs to Bellamy's, anxious groups might be seen busily discussing the words of the motion, and speculating upon its effects. As the members passed in and out, they were stopped and questioned, and held in conference by attorneys, engineers, shareholders, and directors, eager to forestal the debate, and to supply hints and arguments favourable to their own objects; and when Mr. Rawlings made his appearance, it was the signal for an universal rush. Everybody had something to ask, or something to communicate to him; the majority of the people present being as deeply involved in the business as he was himself.

He met the torrent of voices with a placidity that justified their confidence in his courage. He had the strongly-knit frame, the solid head, and calm, passionless, but handsome, face of a man of inflexible resolution. There was not a trace of emotion visible in his features, and the extreme quietude of his manner indicated a firmness and self-possession which few men could have exhibited under such circumstances. The superstitious reliance upon his fortunate genius, which had hitherto borne down all opposition, and conjured golden triumphs out of hopeless emergencies, had not yet departed from him. It still lingered amongst that numerous class of professional speculators who hovered over the defunct lines, like vultures over a carcase, as long as a vestige of pickings remained.

The scene in the interior of the House was as tumultuous as on the outside. There was an unusually large attendance. The rage for shares had penetrated even that august body, and a considerable proportion of the members were directly interested in the disclosures which it was understood Sir Peter was prepared to make. It was his speech, rather than his motion, that was looked forward to with apprehension. Nobody cared much about the

motion; for what with the inevitable delays that wait upon the labours of committees, and the facilities for obstruction and procrastination presented by the machinery of Parliament, there could be no difficulty in staving off the report, session after session, until curiosity and clamour should have expired. The debate was the thing to be avoided; and the debate was the main object upon which, in the first instance, Sir Peter hoped to attract public attention. His entry into the House with a huge bag of papers, consisting of prospectuses, letters of allotment, circulars, balance-sheets, plans, maps, bills of costs, multifarious accounts, and lists of committees comprising an appalling show of members of Parliament, was ominous of slaughter.

Mr. Rawlings took his usual seat, which happened to be in an angle a few benches removed from Sir Peter, a position which enabled the latter to command a full view of him, and to give pointed effect, with hand and gesture, to the personal allusions with which he freely garnished his oration.

Sir Peter was by no means a good debater: but he was famous at getting up a case. His diligence in the collection of small facts, the bitterness and causticity of his invectives, and the relentless perse-

verance with which he hunted down his victim, rendered him a formidable opponent on occasions like the present. From the whispers that had got abroad of the nature of the statement he intended to make, the general question had become gradually merged in the personal impeachment, and the whole interest of the scene was concentrated upon the accuser and the accused. The House watched the progress of the business with much the same sort of eagerness a Roman mob may be supposed to have felt when two gladiators leaped into the arena.

A speech of two hours' length, containing a bushel of "modern instances" to a penniworth of "wise saws," could not fail to tell. It possessed the charm which always attaches to fierce attacks upon character and the exposure of corruption. The whole system of railway jobbing was laid open from the beginning; the art of rigging was clearly expounded, and plentifully illustrated; the unauthorised use of influential names; the tricks and subterfuges of unprincipled attorneys; the frauds of boards in the sale of shares and appropriation of funds; and numerous secret acts of collusion and swindling of which the innocent public had little or no suspicion. At every count of the indictment Sir Peter was careful to mark out the

chief offender, calling upon him at each step as he advanced to furnish explanations of sundry mysterious transactions concerning which no satisfactory account could be wrung from him by the suffering shareholders. If the existing law did not reach these nefarious cases, then a law, having a retrospective operation, should be specially enacted for the purpose. At all events, he (Sir Peter) was resolved that no effort of his should be wanted to bring the iniquity to light; and after drawing a picture, for which he was several times called to order, of a career of spoliation by which an obscure man had contrived to obtain unparalleled influence over credulous masses of people, infecting nearly the whole community with an insane belief in his infallible power of turning everything he touched into gold, Sir Peter concluded by moving for a sweeping inquiry under the auspices of a Select Committee.

There was a dead silence when he sat down. Everybody waited for the answer. At last, after a pause, Mr. Rawlings rose. As the House seemed to expect that he should say something, he rose, he said, in obedience to their wishes, but he really had nothing to say. The hon. gentleman had indulged in a number of rambling and unintelligible asser-

tions, out of which it was impossible to select a single tangible charge. That House was not competent to deal with such matters. It was not a Criminal Court, as the hon. gentleman seemed to think. But he challenged him to bring his allegations before a tribunal where they could be properly investigated, and he pledged himself to prove that the whole statement was a tissue of the grossest blunders and misrepresentations. Until the hon. gentleman adopted that course, he should treat his calumnious imputations with the contempt they deserved.

This little evasive speech gave great disappointment to the House, which had waited all this time in expectation of a contest of angry personalities. A buzz of disapprobation followed, and once this feeling had set in, the tide rose rapidly against the accused. When the House of Commons takes up a question of this nature in a high temper of virtuous indignation, the storm of condemnation accumulates with prodigious force. It is one of the infirmities of human nature to kick prostrate lions; and the defamatory discussion which ensued upon the member for Yarlton's speech, showed that the Collective Wisdom was not exempt from the common frailty.

Richard Rawlings had acquired impunity from success; but it was of no avail to him here. He had confidently calculated upon the *prestige* which heretofore carried him triumphantly through all difficulties, and he found it suddenly overwhelmed by ridicule and obloquy. But he was too callous and obdurate to wince under the hits he received, and the only effect they produced upon him was to work up to the surface the natural obstinacy of his character, which exhibited itself in a front of open defiance. In the midst of the tempest, he left the House, and the first person he encountered in the lobby was Lord Charles Eton. Writhing under the disgrace of the scene he had just witnessed, and thinking chiefly of the damage it was likely to inflict upon himself, Lord Charles was not in a mood to temporise with his father-in-law, whose look of bravado at that moment impressed him with a painful conviction of that gentleman's recklessness on the point of reputation. Mr. Rawlings walked straight up to him with a hardihood that quite shocked his lordship's fastidious nerves.

"Well, Lord Charles," exclaimed Mr. Rawlings, plunging his hands into his pockets, and jingling the loose coins he found there, as if he were exulting

over public opinion in the abundance of his wealth; "we have had a fine specimen to-night of the justice of the House of Commons. They are resolved to crush me, it seems; but we'll beat them!"

"We?" replied his lordship. "I beg you will not mix me up in the business. I have heard quite enough to make it imperative on me to stand clear of it."

"Then the best thing you can do," said Rawlings, "is to go back and vote for the committee. Let it be entered on the records that Lord Charles Eton is living on a fortune which he believes to have been dishonestly gained."

"If I consulted my own feelings," returned his lordship, flushing up to the roots of his hair, "there could be no hesitation as to what I should do. But you know well, sir, that I am restrained by consideration for the feelings of others. The taunt is worthy of the coarseness you have exhibited throughout these disreputable transactions."

"Your insolence is equal to your folly. You think you can prop up your own character by breaking with me at this moment, to show the world how pure and upright you are. I take you at your word. Personally I have done with you;—but for my

daughter's sake I will keep a strict watch upon you. I have reason to believe that you are inclined to revenge upon her your hostility to me, and I will compel you to treat her with the respect which is her right as your wife. If I find that you slander me, or show these imperious humours to her, I warn you to look to the consequences."

Lord Charles felt the blood bounding in his temples at these words, which were spoken loud enough for the bystanders to hear; and his pride was galled to the core by the titter that rang in his ears as Richard Rawlings, turning his back contemptuously upon him, moved slowly away through the crowd.

The admonition about his lordship's treatment of his wife was too well founded. Margaret had not complained to her family; but a coldness had grown up between her and Lord Charles, which could not be concealed. Mr. Rawlings had observed it, and now that an open rupture had taken place with his son-in-law, he saw in this domestic alienation a means of wreaking some satisfaction upon the Etons for the insults they had cast upon him.

His feelings were embittered by desertion and persecution. From the time the committee (which

was carried without a division) began its sittings, his aristocratic friends gradually dropped off, and the malice of his enemies increased in energy and venom. The whole world seemed to be rising up in judgment upon him; every man's hand was against him, and his hand was against every man. The only person who clung faithfully to him, and would believe nothing to his disadvantage, was poor Dingle. But even Dingle at last ceased to show himself at Park-lane, and having heard nothing of him for several days, they were beginning to set him down amongst the rest of their fine-weather acquaintances, when the following note was sent in to Mr. Rawlings one morning by a scrubby boy, who waited outside the door for the answer:

“MY DEAR RAWLINGS,—

“By some confounded mistake I have been arrested for the inconceivable sum of thirteen thousand pounds. Of course the thing is perfectly ridiculous, for you know I don't owe a penny in the world. I have been here three days, and would have written to you at once, only I hoped to get out by explaining the matter; but find it's no use. They won't listen to anything. I can't make it out

at all. Sorry to trouble you about such an unpleasant business—haven't a friend but yourself I can look to. Will you come or send somebody.

“Yours faithfully, in devilish low spirits,

“SCOTT DINGLE.

“Whitecross-street, Thursday.”

If Richard Rawlings was susceptible of a touch of remorse, this note must have awakened it. Poor, airy Dingle had fluttered through the first stages of the panic with a feeling of indifference and security that made this sudden reverse in his fortunes all the more pitiable. Writ after writ had been served upon him, but he treated them as a joke. Everybody told him that it was only done to frighten him, and Dingle, under the strong wing of Richard Rawlings, was not to be frightened. At length, he was taken in execution, and straightway lodged in Whitecross-street Prison. In vain he remonstrated in the most gentlemanly manner with the mysterious individual who escorted him there, and who seemed to know as little about the matter as he did himself. The mysterious individual could not even tell him who the plaintiff was, or how the debt was contracted; and when Dingle protested that he didn't owe the money, that he never heard the name of

his astonishing creditor before, and, taking out his watch, declared that he would have an action against him for false imprisonment for every hour he was detained against his will, the individual smiled, and said that he hoped he would recover swinging damages.

When this note reached Park-lane, Mr. Sloake happened to be in the house. He had latterly found access to Mr. Rawlings, who, having much business on hand, contrived to make employment for him in a general way as a sort of half-clerk and half-runner. He carried bags of papers to and fro with exemplary diligence, and, always in the hope of getting something better to do, was ready to do anything. To this trustworthy agent was confided a letter in reply to Dingle's application, Mr. Rawlings taking great pains to explain to him the exact location and character of the place he was going to, and the nature of the mission he had to discharge. The matter was of no slight importance to Rawlings himself, for Dingle's evidence was essential to his case, and, even if he were not moved by any better motive on his behalf, it was necessary for his own sake to exhibit a lively interest in the misfortunes of the incarcerated director.

Mr. Sloake put up the letter very carefully in a leather-case he carried in the breast-pocket of his great coat; and set out with infinite circumspection on his nervous journey into the city. He had grown very cunning in the streets. Having had his pocket picked three days in succession, and been once knocked down by an omnibus horse, and pitched on another occasion into the window of an oyster shop, he felt the necessity of keeping his eyes open on all sides. Experience had made him wonderfully wise. He regarded every man that stood lurking about corners with suspicion, never stopped to look at the shops, always kept close to a policeman, whenever he was lucky enough to fall in with one, and wherever he saw a crowd gathering he instinctively shuffled across to the opposite side of the street. By a strict adherence to these rules, which kept his attention painfully on the stretch, he was laboriously acquiring an insight into the art of walking with safety through the thoroughfares of London.

After many tortuous turns and indefatigable inquiries, Mr. Sloake found himself in front of the Debtors' Prison in Whitecross-street. He paused a minute or two to ruminate on the structure, and the

new train of ideas it forced upon his mind. Sloake was not a philosopher; he was more like a youth beginning the world, to whom every incident opened up a fresh spring of curiosity. Here was a debtors' prison, crowded, no doubt, with inmates—poor men who, like himself, had struggled hard to live outside the walls as long as they could, and who were finally borne down by unmerited misfortunes. He thought of the gloom that must reign within, and of the harsh dispensations of fortune that doomed so many suffering fellow-creatures to so melancholy a fate. As he passed through the dark, grated door, and heard the keys clink, and the bolts shoot into their places, his heart sank within him. He had to cross a court-yard where several persons were scattered about, and he hardly dared to lift his head from a sensitive reluctance to look upon their poor pale cheeks and rueful eyes. All at once he was startled out of his philanthropic reverie by the blow of a tennis-ball which struck off his cap, and, as he went scrambling after it through the crowd amidst yells of laughter, he was so roughly tussled about from one to another, that he was very thankful when he got safely into the corridor which, he was informed, led to Captain Scott Dingle's room. He was be-

wildered by the shock; but not half so much stunned by the tennis-ball, as by the extraordinary hilarity and wild behaviour of the poor debtors. He concluded that long privation and confinement had turned their brains; and was a thousand times more afflicted by that consideration, than if he had found them all, as he expected, sitting in a row, and looking as dismal as so many monumental effigies.

Stopping a little to recover his breath and adjust his cap, then taking out his leather-case and extracting Mr. Rawlings' letter from it, he knocked gently at the door to which he was directed. He waited a minute or two. There was no answer. He listened to ascertain if there was any stir within, and presently heard a husky voice giving out the words of a song, so broken and interrupted by snatches of drinking and talking, that he could make neither head nor tail of it. He knocked again, more loudly than before, and was summoned to "come in," with a vehemence that startled him. Opening the door softly, and pioneering his way with his umbrella, he stood on the threshold, rather embarrassed and somewhat alarmed by the aspect of the apartment and its tenants.

It was a small whitewashed room. Two or

three queer prints and ballads were pasted on the walls. The furniture consisted of a single table, which had formerly been a washhand-stand, and was now, by a little ingenuity, made to answer both purposes, a couple of narrow beds, and a chair ; an open cupboard displaying a perfect museum of curiosities ; a few stray books, a flower glass, a kettle, bundles of clothes, bottles, jugs, a shaving-case, hairbrushes, a corkscrew, an odd boot, a pair of slippers, an iron pan, and various articles of earthenware, whole, cracked, and chipped. Upon a bed, close under the cupboard, sat a tempestuous, hirsute man of brawny dimensions in his shirt sleeves, with an uplifted glass in one hand, roaring out a " View holloa !" and a " Hark ! tantivy ! tantivy !" as Sloake appeared in the doorway. The table, which was drawn before him, had been apparently prepared for dinner, and was furnished with a couple of plates, a bottle, a pot of porter, and a loaf. The brawny gentleman was evidently anticipating the festivity, by taking the start of his companion, a tall, thin, pensive man in a showy dressing-gown, who was leaning over the fire cooking something on a gridiron. As Sloake entered, the gentleman in the shirt-sleeves turning off the end of his " View

holloa!" with a sudden jerk of his voice, exclaimed—

"What the divil are you standing there for like a Banshee, letting the wind in on the meat? Shut the door, and tell us what you want."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Mr. Sloake, "are you Captain Scott Dingle?"

"I haven't that honour, sir," returned the other; "but there he is as large as life, watching the gridiron through his spyglass. It isn't the first broil he has had a hand in. What do you say, captain?"

"Eh?" cried the captain, "somebody wants me? Wait a minute—done to a nicety! hold the plate—" and lifting the gridiron off the fire, with his companion's assistance, Captain Scott Dingle deposited a large kidney and a steaming steak upon one of the plates. Then turning to Sloake, he inquired,

"Want me? Haven't the pleasure of knowing you—odd style of man," he added, aside to the other.

"Mighty like a process-server," rejoined his friend.

"Damn it," whispered the captain, "they can't serve writs here?"

"It's convenient for the purpose, at all events, for they're sure to find you at home. Don't mind him—go on with your dinner."

"Excuse me, we're not very ceremonious here, you see," said the captain, getting up a slight laugh in one corner of his mouth, "I'll attend to you presently—rather particular about having my steak hot—take a chair, and—no, hang it! There's no chair—find a seat for yourself there on the bed—capital! tender as butter—cooked to perfection—eh, Costigan?"

At the mention of the name of Costigan, Mr. Sloake, who had retreated to the opposite bed, opened his eyes wide, and fixing his green spectacles firmly on his nose, began to gaze with a look of astonishment upon that gentleman.

"Pardon, monsieur," he said, after a pause, diving his hand at the same time into the breast-pocket of his coat, "is your name Costigan?"

"Costigan?" exclaimed the other, "my name? What the devil's the fellow fumbling in his pocket for? By my honour," he continued, in an under tone to the captain, "I've a shrewd suspicion he has writs for us both. What's your reason for asking my name, my fine ould bashaw?"

"Certainly—I will tell you," replied Sloake; "I have something for you here."

"I daar say you have," returned Costigan; "but you may put it up again, for I'm not the person you're looking for. I'm somebody else, my darlin' fellow. I'm not him, whoever he is."

"But maybe he is somebody to you. Ha! here it is—'Michael Costigan, Esq.'"

"Eh! what is it?" inquired Costigan, "only a letter. You're not trying to trap me now, are you?"

"Trap you, sir? What do you mean? It is a letter for Mr. Costigan."

"Captain," whispered Costigan aside, "will you take it from him,—no service in that, you know,—let us see what it is."

"Allow me," said the captain, taking the letter; " 'Michael Costigan, Esq.,' can't be you, of course, I suppose—eh?"

Costigan read the inscription of the letter cautiously over the captain's shoulder, and exclaimed,

"By my honour, but it is me though; it's from that poor lad, Harry Winston. I suppose I must own to myself now, for read that letter I will, if he had a wisp of writs in his pocket. Before I reveal my identity," he continued, addressing Mr. Sloake,

"will you be obliging enough to tell me where you got that letter?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Sloake; "I got it from Madam Stubb, to leave at the hotel for Mr. Costigan."

"No trick, eh?"

"No—I do not understand you."

"Come," cried Costigan, "tell us who you are; that's coming to the point."

"Who I am? certainly, sir; I am Mr. Sloake, *agent d'affaires* that was—*ci-devant*, you understand. I live at Madam Stubb, and I come here with a little letter to Captain Dingle from Mr. Rawling."

"From Mr. Rawlings?" exclaimed the captain, starting up; "fire and fury, sir, why didn't you give it to me before?"

"You were on your steak—you like your bifeck hot, you know."

"Ah!" cried the captain, bursting open the note, and reading it with avidity, while Costigan was similarly engaged with Henry Winston's letter; "good fellow that Rawlings—can't come, but will send his solicitor to me—he'll soon settle the business—all right!—capital fellow."

"Poor divil!" muttered Costigan to himself, "that cruel, hard-hearted ould Rawlings has all this to answer for. It'll come against him some day, I'll be bail."

"What's the matter, Costigan," inquired the captain.

"Well, there's no secret in it now," replied Costigan, "but if I had my will of somebody, it isn't hot rolls and coffee I'd be asking him to early in the morning. Coffee! By my conscience, I don't forget the coffee to him. Will you take something to drink, Mr. Coke? We haven't much variety, but you're welcome to what there is—a gentle infusion of gin, and the trifling remains of a tankard of Barclay."

"No, thank you, sir—my name is Mr. Sloake, sir."

"Sloake? a good, ould, amphibious name, that," returned Costigan, filling his glass, and draining it at a single gulp, followed up by a wild scrap of a song—

"My name is Teague, and I live in state,
I live above the frowns of fate,
With my stick, stone-platter, and bit o' meat,
And maybe I care for the high and great!"

"But the letter from Winston," said the captain; "what is it, Costigan?"

"Ah! yes, sir, if you please," cried Sloake, coming over to the table; "that poor *garçon*—it will be good for Madame Stubb to hear—she love him, sir, Mr. Winston—when he go to America, and no one hear nothing of him, I think of my *pauvre petit*, my little Eugène—ah! sir, it make my heart very sad."

"Go to America!" exclaimed Costigan; "nonsense—he never went to America—that was only a *ruse*—and all for nothing. There, captain, you read the letter—it's a cramp hand for a man after dinner."

The captain read the letter aloud:

"MY DEAR MR. COSTIGAN,—

"I wrote three letters to the address you gave me——"

"Never got one of them," interrupted Costigan.
"Go on."

"——and send this upon chance to Duke-street, thinking you may call there. Of course you know all that has happened. I will not trouble you with particulars about myself now, but will tell you everything when I see you. I came down here immediately after, and have been on the sick list

ever since—very ill. You would hardly know me again. But I am getting round, and determined not to give up the ghost this time. I scribble these few lines to tell you that I am coming to town, where I hope to see you. I intend to make a descent on Mrs. Stubbs, if she can find room for me. At all events, you will be sure to hear of me there.

“Till we meet, and ever, yours faithfully,

“H. WINSTON.

“Wren’s Nest—Saturday.

“P.S.—I often look at your pistols, and wonder shall I ever have any use for them.”

“Ha!” exclaimed Sloake, “he come back to his *appartements*—I live at his *appartements*—with all my heart he shall come—and good Madame Stubb—oh! certainly, she will open her arms for him. But the young lady, sir—what you say nothing about the young lady?”

“Well, do you know,” replied Costigan, “I think the less that’s said about her the better. Let her down easy. She’s settled for life, and by this time, I dare say, he doesn’t care an ould button about her.”

"For his wife, that he run away with? Ah! sir, that is very bad."

"What are you knocking your head against, my venerable friend? Harry Winston's wife? Bethesda! who tould you he had a wife?"

"Madame Stubb, certainly."

"Then give my respectful compliments to Madame Stubb, and tell her that she's labouring under a mental delusion. Have you a wife yourself?"

"*Mon Dieu!* My dear Eugénie—she is gone from me to heaven!"

"Well—that's more than I can say of Harry Winston's wife that was to be. She's gone from him, but I can't exactly say she's gone to the same place."

"She gone too? *Malheureux!* Everybody all wrong—very sorry to see this good man in prison—ah! it was a friend like you, Mr. Costigan, to come and see him—very good friend in his trouble."

"Not at all—not at all," returned Costigan, with a sly glance at Dingle: "I don't take the last credit for coming here—not the last in life."

"The fact is," said Dingle, "I oughtn't to be here myself. The rascally lawyers have made a set

upon us; but they'll find themselves in the wrong box. Wait till we get out, that's all."

Mr. Sloake raised his spectacles and looked piteously at Mr. Costigan, shrugging his shoulders, with an accompanying ejaculation, to indicate his regret at finding that they were both in durance.

"It's by no means so bad a thing, after all," said Costigan; "I regard it entirely as a mighty great compliment, considering the circumstances."

"What circumstances?" inquired Dingle.

"What circumstances?" reiterated Costigan. "I'll tell you in confidence. Before I came here, I had a suspicion that I was rather hard up for credit. You may imagine, then, how pleased I was to find that, somehow or other, without knowin' anything about it, I owed somebody forty thousand pounds, be the same more or less. That's the sum,—there are sixteen detainers against me—more power to them! The divil a know I know how I did it! but if I had an unencumbered estate, and didn't owe a farthing in the world, I couldn't be much deeper in debt—and that's a comfort."

This reckless way of treating their common misfortune, instead of making Captain Scott Dingle laugh, produced the contrary effect. It was not

pleasant to be reminded of these enormous responsibilities, although their magnitude was the very element in them out of which men in their condition could alone extract a solitary hope of escape.

Dingle went to the cupboard, took down a sheet of paper, and wrote a hasty note to Mr. Rawlings; while Costigan was charging Mr. Sloake with a message to Mrs. Stubbs. These little matters being arranged, Mr. Sloake withdrew, after many expressions of condolence, his head confused by the strange discoveries he had made about Mr. Costigan and Harry Winston, and his heart aching for the poor prisoners he left behind him.

CHAPTER III.

VERY SHORT, BUT VERY IMPORTANT TO THE PEOPLE CONCERNED
& IN IT.

THE panic which penetrated so many homes in the fatal year of 1845, found its way into the gorgeous mansion in Park-lane at last. Mrs. Rawlings was shockingly alarmed. She did not know exactly what she had to fear, and her ignorance magnified the danger. Mr. Rawlings was by no means communicative with her; all she could get from him was an assurance that there was nothing to apprehend; but this had the effect of rendering her so nervous, that she made it a point to cross-examine everybody that came to the house in the hope of procuring some intelligence. She was constantly on the stairs watching and listening for knocks; and whenever she could intercept any of Mr. Rawlings' visitors she would beckon them into the drawing-room, and try to extract a little private and con-

fidential news from them. That the information she obtained in this way aggravated her alarm is not improbable, as she grew thinner and more fidgety every day, and when any one spoke comfortingly to her, showed symptoms of an inclination to go off into hysterics.

Clara exhibited more firmness. The mental suffering she had passed through had imparted a seriousness to her character which prepared her to meet worldly calamities with composure. Her sister's marriage, to some extent, relieved her of the weight that pressed upon her spirits, and left her free to think for herself and about herself. From that time the house was no longer the home it had been to her. Wealth had brought them all into a factitious world, had broken up their domestic ties, sowed discord between father and daughter, and placed them in a false position in society, which was now becoming painfully conspicuous. She longed to escape out of that poisoned atmosphere, and to be at peace in seclusion. The vivacity of her nature was gone, but the strength of her will remained, and was not slow in shaping a course of action for the future.

London seasons have as quickening an influence as

the hot air of the forcing-house. Feelings that take a long time to grow up to maturity in the open climate of the country, germinate with wonderful rapidity in the *salons* of London. Clara discovered this fact before the expiration of her first season; but she was not easily dazzled by her admirers. There was safety in the multitude of them, and, so long as liberty was a pleasure to her, she had no inclination to part with it. Her universality, however, did not last long; and she took a different view of human life and its enjoyments when corroding anxiety had begun to make havoc of her gaiety.

Most of the brilliant men who had hitherto pressed themselves into her train, disappeared with one excuse or another, soon after Mr. Rawlings' name became associated with charges of corruption and malversation. A few of them yet lingered behind, cautiously hanging about her to wait the issue of events, and ready to advance or retreat according to circumstances. But there was one whose quiet devotion had undergone no alteration, and who had early touched her heart, although she never thought proper to acknowledge it to herself until the approach of contumely enabled her to distinguish between the true love and the false—if a woman's

sagacity can ever be said to require the help of such a test.

George Farquhar was the son of a merchant, had a share in the house, and was possessed of a competence ample for the modest ambition of a private gentleman. There was nothing whatever striking in his manners or appearance, and it was necessary that you should become very intimate with him before you could discover the good sense and integrity of character that lay beneath his calm and unpretending exterior. He was a man especially calculated to inspire confidence amongst those who knew him thoroughly—a man who made little show or profession in time of prosperity, but whose truth and fidelity might be relied upon in adverse circumstances. It was when the clouds were lowering over the doomed house in Park-lane, that his attachment for Clara became manifest to her in a form which she was no longer disposed to treat with indifference.

By what ways he made known his feelings to her—how the mystery gradually took an intelligible shape—how the distant admirer insensibly drew closer and closer, and warmed into the ardent lover—what confessions were extorted on both sides—

how Clara tried his patience at first—how she relented at last—and how it came to pass that she finally yielded to his suit, and pledged herself to him, without consulting anybody on the subject, are matters which need not be dwelt upon. It was a very earnest piece of love-making between them; very earnest and grave in its opening, and fixed and irrevocable in its close. No two people in the world were ever bound together by bonds of their own choosing whom it would be more difficult to separate.

It has been said that when a gentleman looks tenderly at a young lady in England, she turns her head aside, and dropping her voice over her shoulder, murmurs, "Ask papa." Clara did not desire Mr. Farquhar to ask papa. She took the responsibility of the matter upon herself, and told him for the present to say nothing to papa about it.

It was certainly not a very opportune time for the introduction of such a subject. Mr. Rawlings had as much business and vexation on hand as would have given work enough to the nerves of half-a-dozen men. But he was equal to the work of half-a-dozen men in the way of business and vexation; and, except that he looked now and then a little

more austere than usual, nobody could guess the prodigious quantity of labour and annoyance he was literally ploughing through every day. Clara was aware of this, and thought it would be unreasonable to trouble him with her love affairs at such a moment. But she had other motives for desiring to delay the delicate confession. With so much anxious occupation preying upon him, it was exceedingly doubtful what sort of reception her father might give Mr. Farquhar. She was determined not to expose her lover to the risk of a temper which had left such deep scars upon her memory. Nor was this all. Who could foresee how her father would come out of the harassing ordeal through which he was passing? Would it be honourable to commit the man she loved any further until the result should be known? Would it be wise, for his happiness or her own, to admit any ground for regrets or reproaches in the future? If the event should be disastrous, it would put the affection of her lover to the severest proof, and, at all events, leave him free to act with the full knowledge of her position. On all accounts she considered it desirable for the present to keep her engagement concealed from her father.

The same necessity, however, did not exist with reference to her mother or her sister; and, shrinking from the imprudence of contracting such a pledge, without confiding it to some members of her family, she determined upon revealing her secret to Mrs. Rawlings and Margaret.

From the latter she received unbounded sympathy. Margaret was rejoiced at the prospect of so delightful a settlement for her darling Clara, and urged her to be firm under all circumstances, and, whatever opposition might be offered to it, not to sacrifice her happiness—as she had done! Bitter experience had done its rough work with the gentle Margaret.

Upon Mrs. Rawlings the announcement had a very different effect: it nearly produced a fit of hysteria. The recollection of what had happened on a former occasion of a similar kind—her dread of Mr. Rawlings' violence—and horror of the consequences should he ever come to the knowledge that she had concealed the secret from him, threw her into a state of nervous excitement that was absolutely alarming. She did not in the least blame her daughter for accepting the proposals of Mr. Farquhar. She gave no opinion upon that. She only

blamed her for telling her anything about it. She ought to have had more consideration for her poor mother than to bring her into such a business. And dear, chattering, frightened Mrs. Rawlings went about the house, and up and down the stairs, listening at the doors, and watching the hall, with this dreadful secret on her conscience, more terrified than ever.

Thus, while Mr. Rawlings was plunged over head and ears in piles of papers and Blue Books, working through a chaos of accumulating difficulties, his family were engaged in a clandestine design against his authority. How strangely the turns of fortune sometimes vindicate the ends of justice. Behold the Man of Gold standing on the pinnacle of the Ladder, assailed by obloquy abroad and conspiracy at home!

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH THE GREEN WILLOW SHOWS SYMPTOMS OF TURNING
YELLOW.

ANY man may drive a coach and six through an act of Parliament. To keep close to the letter of the law, to flirt in the very mazes of the web and laugh at the spider, is an ordinary exploit.

All throughout the searching investigations of Sir Peter Jinks' committee, Richard Rawlings was able to give a colourable justification to every item of the charges brought against him. He had the law on his side—let equity or public opinion decide as they might.

But it was necessary for his defence to procure the liberation of Dingle and Costigan. Their evidence was indispensable. They had signed cheques innumerable, of the destination of which they knew nothing—but then they could swear that they had signed them. Every transaction was perfectly re-

gular. There was the chairman, and his quorum, or chorus, of two directors, and the secretary who entered everything duly in the minutes. What was it to the purpose that they were creatures of his own? Each particular was duly vouched, and incontestably legal.

But how was the liberation of these important witnesses to be effected? To anybody else it would have been difficult—Rawlings alone possessed a necromantic influence over the railway attorneys. This requires a little explanation.

The law was vague and unsettled. It was impossible to decide who was responsible and who was not. The judges had ruled both ways and every way; and their decisions contradicted each other so flatly, that if precedents went for anything, every man was safe and no man was safe.

In this state of affairs creditors saw that it was rather a costly experiment to try the question of liability with men of straw. But how were the men of substance to be got at? The proofs of their liability were contained in the official registers of extinct or scattered boards. And where were they? Absconding secretaries had dropt tears upon the records, and locked them up.

Now, it was quite clear that Dingle and Costigan were men of straw; and when Rawlings offered to supply the names of a few solvent directors, with a private understanding that the proofs of their liability should be forthcoming, on condition that the proceedings against his friends were abandoned, the creditors eagerly closed with so advantageous a proposal. And so Dingle and Costigan were liberated at once, an exchange of hostages common enough in that happy age of chicane.

When Dingle found himself in the open air again, he fluttered round and round like a bird that, after being limed on a bough, has suddenly disengaged itself, and is trying its air-cells in chirping circles about the green woods. Down to Westminster and back to Park-lane, and exulting through St. James's-street and Pall Mall, his recent vexations had no other effect on him than that of a victory. He knew all along it was merely an attempt to frighten him, and he was now more triumphant than ever. The examinations before the committee were not quite so agreeable. They endeavoured to make him confess that he was a mere instrument in the hands of Rawlings, at which he showed great indignation, and was immediately desired to confine him-

self strictly to the interrogatories that were put to him. They next cross-questioned him about the election for Yarlton, and tried to extract a confession from him that upon that occasion he acted as a catspaw, which threw him into such a rage that they ordered him out of the room. Mystifications of this kind met him at every turn; but he threw them off with juvenile elasticity as long as his funds lasted. When scrip was no longer convertible into cash, and nothing remained on hand but a quantity of waste paper, once preserved as a treasure of similar potency to the inexhaustible purse in the fairy tale, it was easy to see that his high spirits were rather forced and unnatural. His life was no longer a pleasant morning dream at the Colonnade Hotel, and a saunter on the sunny side of the street, with his gallant bamboo swinging between finger and thumb; he dwindled insensibly down to an obscure bedroom and the cheap eating-houses, into which he would dart in the dusk of the evenings with his coat buttoned up round his ears, and his hat over his eyes, so that nobody should know him. Still, through all transformations and vile tricks of fortune, Captain Scott Dingle maintained the same easy and negligent air that had always distinguished him.

All was threadbare with him, save and except the gentleman.

Costigan took the matter differently. He bewildered the committee. They might as well have examined *Punch* himself. Instead of affording them information, he made them laugh. The contrast between him and Dingle showed what a sway Rawlings exercised over men of the most opposite character, for while the one was evidently innocent of all intentional deception, the other was as evidently guilty of it; yet both were equally the dupes and agents of the master-spirit.

The first thing Costigan did, as soon as he got out of Whitecross-street, was to inquire after Henry Winston; and he had the satisfaction of being informed by Mrs. Stubbs that she expected that young gentleman in town the following evening at nine o'clock. Costigan was punctual to the time, and arrived just as Henry Winston drove up to the door. Mr. Sloake had been accommodated in the attics to make room for the new comer in his old apartments.

Henry Winston was grievously changed. He had grown pale, and thin, and nervous. "Men have died," says Beatrice, "and worms have eaten

them, but not for love." But there is a living death that is not put at rest in the grave. And Henry Winston had suffered it. The body survived, but the heart had perished. The brightness of youth had fled from his face; his animal spirits were extinguished; there was no enthusiasm left to stimulate him to exertion; he took no pleasure in the life around him; and every exertion he made to effect an interest in it, was visibly an effort as painful as it was unsuccessful. He lighted up instantly on meeting Costigan; but, as he pressed his hand, old memories (they were old to him, and seemed to have gone back years and years into the mists of childhood) came upon him, a hectic colour mounted into his cheeks, and he turned away his head to stifle his emotion.

Mrs. Stubbs overwhelmed him with welcomes, and even Mr. Sloake, with Eugène looming out at his elbow, could not help coming clattering down the stairs to shake hands with him. Mrs. Stubbs had provided a little supper in his own apartments, and almost looked as if she expected to be asked to stay and partake of it. Her anxiety to hear all that had befallen him carried her beyond that strict line of etiquette which she prided herself upon observing

towards her lodgers, and Costigan's gallantry was put to its last shifts in dexterous devices to get rid of her. At last they were alone.

"Now," said Costigan, "you must eat something before we open our budget. There's a roast fowl that might pass for a turkey in the dark. Just try a wing."

"I don't think I can eat anything," returned Harry; "let me see you begin."

"You're tired? Ah! my poor fellow, the room brings back the old trouble. Don't think of it now. I was in hopes by this time it was all forgotten."

"Forgotten!" cried Harry, "I wish it was—I try to forget it—but that morning—it is swimming before me now—it is always before me. No matter! we'll talk of it by-and-by. What's this?"

"Well," said Costigan, "I suppose Mother Stubbs means it for sherry. Try a glass of it. Wasn't it very odd I never got your letters? Where did you direct them to?"

"To the address you gave me."

"It's easy to say we live under free institutions—and the freest institution in it is the Post-office, for it does what it likes. The irregularities of that

establishment is enough to engender a revolution. Another glass of wine—not so bad!”

“Do you ever see anything of the Rawlingses now?” inquired Winston.

“I see Rawlings himself,—I saw him to-day; and I’ve a strong suspicion he’s beginning to break down.”

“I’m sorry to hear it. He treated me ill—but I have no hostility against *him*. What do you mean by breaking down?”

“The committee are cutting him to pieces. Conjuring tricks are all very well till they’re found out; and it was a ‘cute touch of legerdemain in Rawlings to buy and sell to himself, and put the profits into his own pockets. But he’ll have to refund every penny of it.”

“I don’t exactly understand.”

“Well, I can tell you, he understands it. When there was lead, and iron, and coals wanted for the railways, being in the secrets beforehand, he bought them up on his own account, then bought them from himself on account of the company. It’s a little intricate, but an astonishing short cut to a fortune.”

"And the enormous wealth that made him sacrifice everything to a false ambition, is not so secure after all!"

"It's just on the cards that they'll beggar him before they've done with him. The bare costs would eat up another man's fortune. But you haven't told me what you've been doing all this time. What became of you that blessed morning that you left me to keep guard over Mother Stubbs? And a pretty handful I had of her. Nothing could persuade her but that you were going to fight a duel, as if I'd be sittin' quietly in the parlour lettin' you have all the fun to yourself. But I thought it best to give her her own way. 'P'rhaps he is, ma'am,' says I; 'and I'm afraid it's a kind of duel that'll be attended by fatal consequences, for divil a second will be at it, I know.'"

Henry Winston now briefly related the circumstance that occurred at the park gate. He spoke in a low tone, and his manner was composed and collected.

"What could I think?" he said; "there she sat, with the only man in the world I could regard as my rival—the man she had over and over again protested she would never encourage—the

man she had made me solemnly promise, on the faith of her pledges to me, not to seek a quarrel with. She first enjoined to be patient, and then—oh! the perfidy of woman. Why did she suffer me to think she loved me? What object could she have in that systematic deception? I have asked myself the question a thousand times, and it is a mystery to me still—unless, unless, she meant to increase his triumph, and give him a crowning proof of her attachment to him by sacrificing me before his eyes. The cruelty of her conduct is inexplicable!”

“But are you sure it was her? Are you sure she saw you?”

“Sure! Do you think it possible I could be mistaken? She looked at me—looked full at me—and smiled! I shall never forget it—that bent head is for ever before me—at night I cannot close my eyes upon it—it is before me in the morning the moment I awake. It is only surprising that I have preserved my senses. Often and often I meditated something—God forgive me! I hope I have vanquished that cowardly thought! I can talk calmly to you about it now, for time has accustomed me to it; but it has eaten into my life—it is killing me.”

“Come, come,” said Costigan, “this will never

do. A young fellow like you musn't fret yourself to fiddlestrings in this way. She isn't worth it."

"That reflection, too, has come to my relief," returned Winston; "there have been moments when I felt that she was unworthy of my true-hearted love, and pride has helped me to struggle against it—but in vain. It was only to sink back again into despair. I have never said so much to anybody else. My sister alone knows my secret, but I couldn't bear to say much to her about it, I was so ashamed of my folly, so humiliated by the consciousness of my own weakness. After all, why should I struggle any more? I have nothing to live for. All joys and hopes are at an end for me; every hour of my life is a dreary blank. I wish it were otherwise—I would make it so if I could."

"You don't mean to say seriously that you still love this woman that has treated you so shamefully?"

"Call it by what name you please, I cannot banish her from my thoughts. The memory of the past consumes me like a slow fire. I live and die in it. She was false—I know it. Her marriage puts it beyond a doubt. Now listen to me quietly, and spare your arguments, for you can urge nothing

that I have not urged to myself a thousand times. I never can be satisfied that she did not love me once. Why did she confess it? Why did she commit herself to it before her father? Her tears were not false—her white lips—her shuddering hands. Why did she write to me and receive my letters up to the very last? I believe that she loved me with her whole soul; if there was deceit in her, then the angels are impure, and there is no trust in anything human. What happened afterwards I know not—why or how that black infidelity entered her heart is inscrutable to me. But my reliance is upon her early love, her first, true, deep, passionate feeling. There is a gulf—wide as the heavens—dividing us; but let her be what she may, or where she may, I believe that the recollection of what has been between us must haunt her with remorse.”

“My dear fellow,” cried Costigan, filling his glass, and pushing the decanter over to Winston, “you’re labourin’ under a melancholy delusion. *Why* a woman pretends to love a man when she doesn’t, is a conundrum that’d baffle ould Nick himself; but when they determine to perjure themselves, depend upon it they have their own reasons for it; and as to the remorse—they have a knack of

shuttin' the door on their consciences that makes it mighty easy to them. You're only deludin' yourself. She has given you up for good and all; and I wonder you haven't more spirit than to waste a thought upon her."

"There's the point, Costigan. That's the thing that nobody can judge of but those who have passed the ordeal. I once thought as you do. I believed that if the woman I loved had been false, I should have flung her from me with scorn, and that my love for her would have turned into contempt and aversion. We all think that before the trial comes. I was inexperienced then, impetuous, and proud. I am changed. My spirit is broken and humbled. At first, maddened by cruel provocation, I resolved to think no more of her, and tried to convince myself that she was base and hideous. But all this time that I was endeavouring to hate her, there was hope at the bottom. So long as there was hope, I was strong in my resentment. But when there was no longer any doubt of her faithlessness, then I felt how much I loved her, and how necessary she was to my existence. She is lost to me for ever, and the bereavement has widowed my heart, and drawn out all its love afresh. It is like the love that

mourns over the grave, full of tenderness and compassion; and I would cheerfully relinquish my life if I could see her for one moment, to tell her that I forgive her."

"No, no!" cried Costigan; "rather a dangerous experiment! Take my advice, and keep clear of her. Why did you come to town?"

"I wanted change of scene. My sister got married and went away, and the place was lonely; and, in fact, I was sick of the country."

"There is an ould saying,—'The longer the chain, the heavier the weight to drag.' But any place is better for you than London."

"No, no. London is the best place to dissipate one's feelings. If you suspect that I have the slightest intention of throwing myself in *her* way, you are wrong. Let us change the subject. I wish you would tell me some news."

"Do you know," cried Costigan, throwing himself back in his chair, and looking searchingly at Winston, "I'm not quite satisfied with the account you give of yourself. Why didn't you come back here that night?"

"No, no—I couldn't bear it. I was ashamed of what had happened. No man likes to be baffled,

and have his feelings trifled with; and, hardly knowing what to do, I walked about half the night, lurked in the Park the whole of the next day, and then, in a paroxysm of fury, made off into the country, determined to let her see how indifferent I was. Brave, wasn't it, Costigan?" he added, with a bitter smile.

"It's a wondther you didn't write to her?"

"Write? I *had* written to her; gave my letter to her sister, and never got an answer. It was in that letter I made the appointment, and there can be no doubt she got it, for she kept the appointment, kept it with a vengeance, by bringing *him* to the spot to point me out to him. I was blinded by the sight—there was no time to think—it didn't occupy a second: they drove past and were gone before I could recover myself. Had I known as much then as I know now, I should have taken my revenge upon the spot."

"Much better as it is," observed Costigan; "let them have rope enough, and the divil a doubt but they'll give you your revenge in full."

"What do you mean?"

"Only a bit of a scrimmage between Rawlings

and Lord Charles. You know they live in the uncle's house?"

"That dreary house! I dined there once; and it recalls an incident which ought to have opened my eyes. What a fool I have been, Costigan, not to have perceived it all long ago. They live with the uncle?"

"Ay, and a pleasant time they have of it. Lord William's a mighty stiff ould buck, and wouldn't touch one of the Rawlingses with the end of a pair of tongs. He's as proud as Belzezebub of his dirty blood, and marches up and down amongst the family pictures like a sentry, for fear, I suppose, somebody would steal one of his fusty ancestors—bad luck to the kit of them, and their health to wear it! You may be sure he crowed like a bantam when Rawlings was attacked about the railways, and there has been the divil to pay between them. The butter's out of the stirabout. Lord Charles has turned his back on her family, and if she hasn't reason by this time to repent of her bargain, she must have wonderful beatin' out in her."

"Has there been a quarrel?"

"What else could be expected from such a match?"

The young wife, poor thing! has found out to her grief that it was for her money he married her. Better for her to be dead than to be doomed to live with such a cold-blooded snake."

"Does he ill-treat her?"

"Oh! I'll answer for it he does nothing you could lay your finger on. But there's more ways than one of 'breakin' an egg, and the worst of all ways is to let it fall. And that's just what he's doing with his wife."

"Costigan!" cried Harry Winston, leaning across the table, and grasping his friend by the arm, "this is more than I can bear. When that man married her, I cast jealousy to the winds. I knew him well—I knew he could never make her happy—but I had no right to be jealous. She was his—lawfully his—and, crushed as I was, I bore it, and resolved to wrestle with the feeling of hatred he had inspired. For her sake—for her sake, Costigan, whom I loved, whom I love still—whose place never can be filled in the heart she has broken—I stifled my vengeance. But now—now," and, starting from his chair, he paced the room in a state of high excitement.

"Easy weather!" said Costigan. "What has got into your head now?"

"My poor Margaret?" exclaimed Henry Winston; "we never can be anything to each other. But that you should be wretched too! Costigan, I could have suffered for her a thousand deaths, and this misery should have worn me out without a word of complaint or reproach so long as I thought she was happy. If this were the last word I had to utter, I swear solemnly that I would have died rather than she should know the anguish I am enduring. I would have spared her that. But she is now as wretched as I am myself; and she is brought to this by him who has made life a burden to me."

"True enough," replied Costigan, "but there's no help for it."

"Help!" cried Winston. "We shall see that. As sure as there's a God in heaven I'll avenge her wrongs and my own!"

Costigan saw the humour he was in, and that it was useless to argue with him. It was evident that Winston was too glad to seize upon any pretext for quarrelling with Lord Charles Eton, and that it would have been injudicious at that moment to offer any strong opposition to his design. Costigan, therefore, contented himself by simply advising him to be careful what steps he took in the matter, and,

above all things, to throw the *onus* on Lord Charles. "If anything comes of it," he added, "remember, my darlin' boy, I'm your man!"

"You know," said Costigan, after a soothing exordium, which was specially calculated to produce an inflammatory effect, "it's the easiest thing in life to put your opponent in the wrong, so that whatever happens nobody can blame you. I'm a great enemy, on principle, to duelling—when it can be avoided. There are cases, of course, when there's nothing but a shot can settle a difference of opinion between gentlemen. And when it comes to that—there's not a word more to be said. But whether this is a case of that kind, I'm not exactly prepared to say. It requires consideration. One thing for your comfort I can tell you, that you couldn't be in better hands for an impartial conclusion upon that point than Mick Costigan's; and if it should appear that there's any reasonable ground for fighting his lordship, I don't hesitate to acknowledge that there isn't a gentleman of my acquaintance I'd have greater pleasure and satisfaction in going out to see pinked."

While Mr. Costigan was delivering the concluding words, he was also employed in drawing the cork of

a second bottle of sherry, for the obvious purpose of sitting down to discuss the merits of the question *in extenso*. Winston was in the right mood to acquiesce in this proceeding. He was elated at the prospect of any desperate suggestion that was likely to bring him into collision with the man he hated so cordially; and we are afraid that there was mixed up with his eagerness on this occasion a sinister hope, too vague and fluttering to take any definite shape, in which Margaret had more concern than in his wiser moments Henry Winston could have fairly justified to his honour or his conscience.

They sat long together, and their conversation took many crooked and confused turns, carrying them far into the small hours; and the tangled hum of their voices indicated that their conference traversed sundry topics, and was, upon the whole, of rather a speculative and desultory cast.

CHAPTER V.

AN EXPLOSION.

MR. MICHAEL COSTIGAN had by no means exaggerated the perils that surrounded Richard Rawlings. In fact, matters were worse than he suspected. Bills in Chancery, actions at law, and the discharge of heavy balances upon unsettled accounts, had made such fearful inroads on the colossal fortune of the railway *millionaire*, as to reduce it to a dubious speculation whether he should be able to stand his ground.

In this extremity, a new enemy appeared in the field. This was the old Earl of Dragonfelt, who thought it a favourable opportunity to try to recover the borough, and procure a transfer of the mortgages on his estates to more friendly hands. The notable scheme was detected by Crikey Snaggs, who had been tampered with by some of the earl's

agents, and who lured them on till he wormed out their design, which he immediately communicated to his master. Crikey was not to be bribed, and the turn which affairs were taking made him more staunch in the interests of his benefactor than ever.

Crikey alone was behind the curtain, and witnessed those private moments, in which the racking anxieties so successfully concealed from the world, involuntarily betrayed themselves. He was proud of his post of confidence, and, regarding himself as a functionary deeply engaged in the secret service of his master, he seemed to have as many eyes in his head as a fly; was close, wary, and full of stratagems, and stopped at no artifices by which he could fish out information from the people who came with letters and inquiries to the house. If he was not very comely to look upon, he had a heart worthy of as fine a person as ever graced a palace, with no slight dash in him, too, of that genius for intrigue which is so useful in back-stairs diplomacy. A strange mixture was Crikey Snaggs, uniting to the cunning and subtlety which are the frequent characteristics of deformity, a courage and fidelity not always found amongst handsome and well-shaped men.

The intelligence he obtained concerning the Dragonfelts determined Richard Rawlings to nip their design in the bud. He had not forgotten the old grudge—the scorn of the truculent peer, and the supercilious insolence of Lord Valteline and his mendacious toady, Mr. Pompey Ragstaffe. In the interval of years that had elapsed since he first winced under their contempt, he had triumphed over them in many ways; the fashionable world had crowded about him, so long as he was believed to wield a great money-power; they had now abandoned him; and the *parvenu* who had been flattered and followed in the zenith of his prosperity, was trampled upon and despised the moment the tide of fortune appeared to be ebbing from him. This galling experience of the falsehood and selfishness of society revived all the bitter feelings of his youth with aggravated force; and he resolved that if he was to fall, he would drag down some of his illustrious time-servers with him. The Dragonfelts presented themselves opportunely as his victims.

Mr. Pompey Ragstaffe, the meanest of the crew, had already worked ample poetical justice upon himself. That vivacious little gentleman had no sooner been deprived of his seat for Yarlton, the

only hold he had upon the Dragonfelts, than his noble patrons unceremoniously dropped him. Lord Valteline alone kept in with him ; but it was secretly, and without the knowledge of his father, and solely for the sake of using his signature on bill-stamps, and employing him as a scout among the discounters. This was a connexion that could not last very long. Dishonoured acceptances brought Mr. Pompey Ragstaffe to a stand-still. He had hitherto filched a fluctuating living out of the discounts by cheating both his lordship and the money-lenders, whom he took good care never to bring face to face ; but an exposure of some of his complex frauds having unluckily taken place, he was blown upon as a person who did not possess even the sort of honour which is said to be sacred among thieves. Fortunately, however, he had a large acquaintance amongst that class of swindlers who have ostensible offices in the inns of court, or flashy addresses at the West End, and who carry on a wide-spread system of plunder with an attractive appearance of credit and respectability. The chief victims of these professional sharpers may be catalogued as elderly, estated gentlemen who are ready to cut off entails, and sell their posterity, for the

gratification of their craving vices—young men of family let loose upon town, who are equally ready to sell their fathers and mothers for an unrestrained indulgence in the pleasures of the *coulisses*, the bells, and other resorts of fashionable vagabondage—officers in the guards—profligate spendthrifts holding patent offices under government—expectant clergymen—and needy members of Parliament. Out of this floating population, half knaves and half dupes, a thriving trade is at all times to be driven by the dealers in post-obits, notes of hand, and warrants of attorney. No man understood the complicated machinery through which the plant is made, and the victim trapped, better than Mr. Pompey Ragstaffe; and, with a view to an elaborate series of depredations upon the public, he got up a firm under a fictitious name, and advertised extensively (without sixpence in his pocket) to lend money on approved securities in any sums from five hundred or a thousand upwards; none but principals to be treated with; and the strictest secrecy observed. The firm had astounding success at first. Their plan of doing business was exceedingly simple. When they got possession of a good bill, the acceptor might as well hope to obtain an

estate in the moon as to get it back again; and the transaction generally ended in a compromise for a sum of money; or, if the gentleman grew restive, and threatened law, the bill was passed to third parties, who recovered the whole amount. There was no escape. Swindlers of this description know very well that people holding any position in society will consent to a sacrifice rather than have their names dragged before the public, and so they take advantage of their cowardice, as beasts of prey fall upon the weaker animals, and eat them up. It sometimes happens, however, that these adroit rogues overreach themselves and are caught in their own nets. A misfortune of this nature befell the Ragstaffe firm. As ill-luck would have it, too, the case was not quite clear of a suspicion of felony; and Mr. Pompey Ragstaffe, taking alarm, made his escape to Boulogne, leaving his confederates to get out of the scrape as well as they could. He is still enjoying the breezes of that pleasant seaport, and is said to make a conspicuous figure at the whist-tables of the *Etablissement*, although, in common with many other members of the fashionable circles of that *refugium*, the resources whereby he lives furnish a topic of much curious speculation.

Mr. Rawlings thought it a pity that Lord Valteline should be divorced from his friend, and having it in his power, by foreclosing the mortgages, to give his lordship an opportunity of rejoining him, he no sooner discovered the underhand courses which the earl was pursuing, than he made up his mind to bring the great Dragonfelt estates to the hammer. The proceeding was severe—but it was an act of retribution, not altogether indefensible on the score of justice. The consequence was the total prostration of that noble house. The earl, old, decrepit, and full of venom, paralysed in his own toils, was put out like a crippled pensioner to live upon a small annuity; and Lord Valteline, hunted from post to pillar by legions of desperate creditors, and unable to raise a guinea upon a name which he had brought up untarnished to town, but which was now smeared and blackened, saw that the game was up, and, dropping down the river at midnight in a crowded steamer, bade adieu, for an indefinite period, to his native land. So distinguished a person, however, could not be suffered to sink into oblivion; notoriety tracks him wherever he goes; and to this day the name of Lord Valteline continues to be announced with all the honours in that select list of outlaws

which is periodically proclaimed by the sheriffs of London and Middlesex.

This affair was productive of great scandal at the West End. It was the common topic at the clubs. Lord William Eton made no disguise of his indignation, and, glad of any excuse to show the world the contempt he entertained for Mr. Rawlings, took special pains, wherever he went, to proclaim his scorn of that gentleman. Even Lord Charles was tempted out of his usual caution and reserve; and was so anxious to express his disapproval of an act which consigned one of the oldest families in the kingdom to a state of dependency, that he wrote a letter to the old earl, in which he declared that Mr. Rawlings' conduct had given him the greatest pain, and that he felt it necessary, for the satisfaction of his own feelings, to assure his lordship that he had for some time ceased to hold any intercourse with that person. During an angry correspondence, which afterwards took place between the earl and Mr. Rawlings, his lordship was mean and spiteful enough to enclose this very letter to the father-in-law of the writer.

At home, Lord Charles took no trouble to conceal the mortification he suffered from the odium that

was gathering over his wife's family. The freezing *hauteur* with which he treated Margaret when her father's railway transactions first began to be talked about, soon settled down into indifference, and it was but a step from indifference to something that might almost be called aversion. In a thousand little nameless ways, by the tone of his scanty conversation, and, above all, by his distant and lofty manner, he kept that conventional gulf that lay between them perpetually before her. He let no opportunity pass of making her feel the superiority of his birth and position. As they sat at breakfast or at dinner, they seemed to her to be separated as widely apart as if "mountains and seas rose up and rolled between their hearts." There was not one point of attraction to draw them together, and the points of repulsion increased day by day.

Tenderness and love were as essential to Margaret as air is to life itself. She had never looked for love in this marriage; but she believed herself secure of contentment—the stagnant calm in which sensitive natures take refuge from the wreck of happiness. She had not calculated upon the inadequacy of the qualities she ascribed to Lord Charles, even if he possessed them, to satisfy the wants of her heart.

She had deceived herself in supposing that she could subsist upon dull amenities and cold respect; although, had there been no worse, she might have lived on very quietly to all outer appearance with a dreary void in her affections; and had Lord Charles been wise he might have filled that void, and won back from its secret anguish a heart that was too much alive to kindness not to be susceptible of generous emotions. But he sacrificed that heart to his pride. Selfishness stepped in between him and the true happiness which might have graced his life, and turned the issues of that unequal union to bitterness and ashes.

She bore it all in silence. She never complained. How could she put into words the small wounds inflicted by looks and tones? How could she describe the minute items of hourly humiliation—the slights which were so plain to her, and invisible to the rest of the world—the trivial indications of systematic neglect—the growing antipathies—the slow sundering of sympathies, wishes, interests, and of all ties of domestic feeling which had hitherto bound them to each other? Her complaints were not in words—but in the pale face, the sad eyes, and wasted health.

Soon after the downfall of the Dragonfelts, there

was a little dinner-party at Park-lane,—quite an accidental gathering, got together at a short notice. Mr. Trumbull, who was always hovering about collecting social statistics for the book upon English life which he intended to publish the moment he returned to America, happened to make a call, and was invited by Mrs. Rawlings. Then there was Mr. Farquhar, whose dreadful secret put Mrs. Rawlings upon thorns every time he came into the house; and Mr. Trainer, the literary friend of the Baroness de Poudre-bleu, who had lately disappeared all of a sudden, an event that awakened Mrs. Rawlings' curiosity so violently that she asked Mr. Trainer to dinner on purpose to talk to him about it; and Lord Clickerly, a young exquisite of high breeding, one of the last drops after the shower of Clara's aristocratic admirers.

The party was unexpectedly increased by a visit from Margaret. She only came to sit an hour with her sister; but they would urge her to stay. She confessed that she did not expect Lord Charles home to dinner, that he said he thought he should dine out, and that she was not to wait for him; but then he might come, and she would not leave him to dine alone on any account. Mr. Rawlings overruled all

these objections, and finally decided the difficulty by sending an express messenger to Portman-square, to say that Lady Charles was dining in Park-lane; so that her ladyship was pressed into the service, in spite of her conjugal protest to the contrary.

As the guests slowly assembled, the conversation before dinner deployed into the established topics. Mrs. Rawlings remarked that the weather was unusually cold for that time of year, and that she was actually obliged to order a fire in the drawing-room last Thursday. Mr. Trumbull observed that the cold in this country was very different from the cold in America; and Mr. Trainer informed the company that the glass was down to 60°. Somebody thought there would be a very mild winter; and somebody else thought that the seasons in England had undergone a wonderful change within the last few years. Several other recondite remarks were ventured upon with similar brevity and freshness, when the agreeable, but languid, conversation was interrupted by the announcement of dinner. Mr. Trumbull, who, notwithstanding his long residence in this country, still persisted in turning down his collar, and in wearing a glossy black silk waistcoat, offered his arm to Mrs. Rawlings, but she had already bespoken Mr. Trainer, and, by way

of compensation, handed Mr. Trumbull over to Lady Charles. Lord Clickerly stood still, expecting, as a matter of course, that he should be appointed to attend Clara; but, to his infinite vexation, Mr. Rawlings requested Mr. Farquhar to take down his daughter.

"We must take care of each other," said Mr. Rawlings to Lord Clickerly, as they moved together in the rear.

"Y-e-s," simpered his lordship, drawing out a cambric pocket-handkerchief, pinching it accurately in the centre, as ladies do, between his forefinger and thumb, and then, with a gentle shake, letting it drop by the four corners. "One doesn't think of being particular—really—in these family parties, you know. By-the-by, Rawlings, who the doose is Farquhar? Any of the Farquhars of Rottenborough?"

"No——" returned the other, adding, in a husky and rather humorous whisper, with a slight squeeze of lemon in it—"the Farquhars of Mark-lane."

"Ha!—good!—really—one of *your* aristocracy, Rawlings, eh?"

"Well—I shouldn't be disposed to exchange him for one of *yours*," replied Rawlings, with a very

grim smile, as he passed to his chair, and motioned Lord Clickerly to a seat beside him.

The success of a dinner-party mainly depends upon selecting people that can go well together in harness; something, also, on the start, and a great deal on the adroitness with which the reins are managed. Your accomplished host knows when to give his team their heads, when to check them, when to draw up, when to dash off at full speed, and when to turn off into new routes and by-roads. Mrs. Rawlings was by no means a proficient in this art; yet, when there were no very great people at table to daunt and flutter her, she made her dinners pass off triumphantly (without knowing it) by the unconscious way she had of chattering and putting everybody at his ease. Her friendly parties were the most unceremonious, lively little gatherings possible. The dinner was first-rate, the style expensive; and, there being no restraint on the gaiety of the guests, who felt as if they could say anything to Mrs. Rawlings, they surrendered themselves to the comfort of relaxing under her hospitable auspices from the formalities they were obliged to observe elsewhere. The combination was undoubtedly rare and perfect; for in what other house was there to be found an en-

tertainment and appointments so costly united to such freedom of enjoyment? To be sure, some of the lords and ladies who partook of these banquets used to laugh in their sleeves at them, ridicule Mrs. Rawlings before her face, which she always received as a marked compliment, and when they were gone, criticise her under-breeding with the most relishing hilarity. But it is open to a doubt whether these pleasant sallies showed their own breeding to as much advantage as they imagined.

The small party in which we are interested at present could not be cited as an example of a well-assorted company. But harmony of colour is sometimes attained by strong contrasts, and here were contrasts enough of the most decided cast. There were no two persons, except the ladies, who could be said to blend with each other; and out of these opposite materials came such collisions of taste and opinion, as made the dinner pass off with remarkable clatter and vivacity, which may be set down as constituting a better thing than the funereal solemnity which at some grand tables turns the cloth into a pall.

Mr. Trumbull entertained the board at intervals with numerous remarks upon English habits,

especially on those points on which they differed from the habits of America. This was his *pièce de résistance*, his *cheval de bataille*. Lord Clickerly, who had a singularly thin voice, like the upper notes of a bird, chirped in every now and then with brief notes and comments on Mr. Trumbull; and Mr. Trainer, in the pauses of the high debate, came out with something strong *au courant* to the literature or politics of the day. As for Mr. Farquhar, who was habitually an observer, he was too agreeably employed to trouble himself much with the general discussion.

"I guess," observed Mr. Trumbull, in reply to an observation hazarded by Mr. Rawlings, "that there is nothing in which the two nations more particularly differ than in the value of time. I expect you don't know the value of time in this country, no more than high-pressure steam-power. That's my deliberate conviction."

"Don't we though!" chirped Lord Clickerly.

"No, you don't," returned Trumbull; "you're far away out of sight behind us in that. I could tell a man that was London raised from one that was State bred, by that infallible test."

"Really?" said his lordship; "by what test, pray?"

"By the simple test," replied the other, "of putting 'em down to dinner together; and, if the State man wouldn't beat him to a stand-still, I'm an alligator, and you may eat me alive, that's all. I have made my speculations on most of your European customs, and I have come to this conclusion, that there is no human being, under Almighty compass, can go-ahead with his dinner like an American. I do expect we're a long chalk ahead of you in that line. And if that ain't an everlasting proof of the value of time, I wonder what is!"

The validity of the proof was admitted at once. Nobody appeared inclined to dispute the question, and even Lord Clickerly, who had fought hard for the English up to this point, allowed, with a lambent smile, that the Americans beat them in voracity.

"Do you hear what Mr. Trainer says of the baroness, Rawlings?" said Mrs. Rawlings, who had been engaged in a low conversation, nine fathoms deep, with that gentleman. "Do tell Rawlings. You know we're all friends here,—now, there, go on, that's a good creature; I'm dying to hear all about it."

"I'm afraid," replied Mr. Trainer, glancing down

the table under his eyebrows, "it will look malicious—and I am the last man——"

"Yes, yes, we know all that," cried Mrs. Rawlings.

"What is it?" inquired Mr. Rawlings; "if you make a mystery of it, we shall suspect it to be something worse than it is."

"No mystery at all," returned Trainer; "the fact is, the baroness, without communicating with anybody, not even with me—and I thought I was in most of her secrets—has disappeared, no man knows whither—although," looking down the table again with an under glance, full of suppressed information, "I could make a tolerably shrewd guess."

"Disappeared!" lisped Lord Clickerly; "why, we knew that already. Can't you tell us any more?—The honour of a glass of wine, Lady Charles?—We want the full particulars."

"Come, come, Trainer," exclaimed Mr. Rawlings, "let us have it at once."

"I say, Rawlings," inquired Lord Clickerly in a whisper, "who is Trainer?"

"An author," returned Rawlings.

"No!" rejoined his lordship, fixing a small

gold eyeglass on his right eye, and scrutinizing Trainer; "who the doose would guess that, to look at him?"

"Well, if you will have it," said Trainer, looking round the table to insure attention before he began—"but remember, it's under protest."

"Oh, of course; go on."

"I have a great horror of scandalous reports," said Mr. Trainer. "When I say anything to the prejudice of a friend, I am scrupulous in ascertaining the truth of it beforehand. In this particular case I happened to come to a knowledge of the truth by rather a curious accident. Everybody knows I was on the most confidential terms with the baroness,—in fact, she consulted me in everything; but latterly she grew reserved and mysterious. So long as people could be useful to her, she kept them about her; but I didn't mind that in the least. I knew her peculiarities; and was too much her friend not to try to serve her in spite of them. The last time I called she was out." (Here Mr. Trainer threw in a significant cough, which made them all laugh.) "I knew what that meant. When I called yesterday, she was gone; and I found a little sallow man in possession of the house, in high altercation with a red-nosed

fellow, that looked big enough to eat him up at a single mouthful."

Clara and Margaret glanced at each other, with an expression in their faces as much as to say, "How very shocking!" but everybody else smiled and laughed; and even Mrs. Rawlings herself, in spite of her good-nature, felt the ludicrous prevail over the pathetic, in the misfortunes of her friend, the baroness. Mr. Trainer went on.

"The little sallow man was the landlord, and the red-nosed fellow was a deluded individual, who imagined that he had some claim on the establishment, which the landlord was by no means disposed to admit. Of course, as the baroness had not consulted me on the matter, I declined to interfere; but the little sallow man would insist, in spite of my remonstrances, upon putting me in possession of the particulars."

"And what were the particulars?" demanded Trumbull, who looked as if he were taking notes with his eyes.

"Very creditable, I must say, to my friend the baroness. The fact was—it's a common case, and nothing at all remarkable,—she was beginning to find London a little too much for her; and so she

made up her mind to go abroad, and economise. Now that's the worst that can be said of her; for nobody has a right to hunt up her private affairs. Hundreds of people go abroad to economise, you know; only she did it rather abruptly. But I have no doubt she had good reasons for that."

"No doubt!" echoed Lord Clickerly.

"Really," said Mrs. Rawlings, growing all at once quite pathetic, "it's a very sad business; I am quite sorry for the poor baroness. I wonder what's become of her son."

"She posted him off," exclaimed Mr. Trainer, "to his uncle, Lord Huxley, who has never seen him, and has always declared he never will; and he'll keep his word."

"To think," said Mrs. Rawlings, "of her going to the Continent by herself! I am sure, when I was abroad, I don't know what I should have done if it hadn't been for Rawlings. I never could have travelled alone."

"Ah, my dear," said Rawlings, "that was a great many years ago,—wonderful alterations since that time."

"To be sure," said Mrs. Rawlings, "the baroness is very different from me—she's so clever. I'm sure,

if it were to save my life, I couldn't write a novel. What was the name of it, my dear?" she inquired, turning to Clara.

"'Agatha; or, The Bride of the Barricades,'" returned Clara.

"Ah! to be sure; I remember now."

During these observations, a strange satirical smile was quietly settling on the face of Mr. Trainer; who, with his eyes fixed upon his plate, was amusing himself idly turning over a bunch of grapes with his fork. There was something so remarkable in his look that it attracted Mrs. Rawlings' notice.

"Ah! Mr. Trainer, you're a critic, and we know what your opinion of 'Agatha' is. It's very clever, now, is it not?"

"Do you think so?" returned Trainer, opening his eyes, and looking full at Mrs. Rawlings; then dropping them on his plate again, and smiling more remarkably than before.

"I have heard you say so yourself," said Mrs. Rawlings; "you know you did—I won't let you escape from it."

"Perhaps—I don't remember—I may have said something of the book; but I don't think you heard me say anything about the author."

"Ah! that won't do. The baroness must be clever to write a book that Mr. Trainer condescends to approve."

"The baroness!" exclaimed Mr. Trainer—and here his mysterious smile became quite formidable. "You are very good-natured, Mrs. Rawlings, very. But do you really believe the baroness wrote that novel?"

"Do—I—really believe?—what a question! Haven't I heard her speak of it a hundred times? Isn't her name on the title-page?"

"Quite true—incontestably true," returned Mr. Trainer; "but the name on the title-page is not always an infallible proof of the authorship;" and he laid a humorous stress on the word *infallible* that set them all off tittering. Never did the dissection of an absent friend yield such involuntary pleasantry.

"But you don't mean to say," began Mrs. Rawlings—

"That the novel," continued Clara and Margaret in a breath—

"Wasn't written," cried Mr. Trumbull—

"By the baroness?" finished Mrs. Rawlings, in a slight half scream.

"How deliciously cool this claret is!" said Mr. Trainer, sipping his wine with invulnerable *non-chalance*; "let me recommend you to try it."

"It's very shabby of you, Mr. Trainer," returned Mrs. Rawlings, drawing away her glass; it is really provoking of you to throw out such dark hints about the poor baroness, and to say that she didn't write her own book."

"Did I say so?" said Trainer.

"No, not exactly; but——"

"And if I did—there's nothing very extraordinary in it. Did anybody ever think the baroness could write a novel? I knew her pretty well, and I never could discover her literary capacity."

"Oh! then," observed Mr. Farquhar, "it is only surmise after all."

"Excuse me!" returned Mr. Trainer, "I don't rob people of their laurels on surmise. The baroness never wrote a book in her life. A friend wrote that novel—a friend—and she implored him to let her put her name to it to give her a little *éclat*. In a moment of weakness and mistaken kindness that friend yielded." Mr. Trainer raised his glass to his lips, and drinking it slowly off, to conceal a grand emotion, fixed his eyes upon the ceiling.

“ Hem ! ” murmured Mr. Rawlings; “ we needn’t ask who that friend was.”

“ I reckon we see *him* pretty clear,” observed Mr. Trumbull.

“ You will admit it is a point of some delicacy,” said Trainer; “ but being an act of strict friendship, and done to oblige a lady, I see no reason why I should disavow it. It was very silly, but none of us are wise you know, Mrs. Rawlings, where ladies are concerned. Capital, though, wasn’t it? to see how the poor baroness used to pass it off as her own, and swallow the flattery wholesale! One thing is quite certain, that had it been published as mine, nobody would have read a line of it—but a baroness! It is astonishing how the circulating libraries gulp down a titled author.”

“ Well,” said Mr. Rawlings, “ you have contrived to work a moral out of it after all, which is more than I expected. If titles give books popularity, your lordship ought to turn author.”

“ I ! ” cried Lord Clickerly, throwing up his head and adjusting his collar, by way of indicating that he was born for higher things. “ I ! ’Pon my honour I should never have patience to write a book.”

"Then," cried Mrs. Rawlings, with the most innocent laugh in the world, "you ought to prevail on Mr. Trainer to write one for you!"

Mr. Trainer tried to smile at this joke, but there was too much wormwood in it to make it pleasant; and Mr. Rawlings, thinking that the conversation had been carried far enough, conveyed a hint to Mrs. Rawlings, by a telegraphic signal which was well understood between them, that it was time for the ladies to withdraw. A little hubbub of chairs and rustling of silks, and the gentlemen were left to themselves over their wine.

The discussions that followed were noisy and desultory. A new light had been let in upon fashionable life and fashionable literature, and nooks and crannies which none of the present company had penetrated before were explored by its help. Mr. Trainer became elevated into a sort of oracle, but was tackled so pertinaciously from opposite points, with curious questions and contradictions by Lord Clickerly and Mr. Trumbull, that he was obliged to drink a great deal of claret to sustain his dignity. Mr. Rawlings and Mr. Farquhar alone comprehended the true state of the case, and agreed perfectly, more by gestures than words, that it was

not altogether very friendly in Mr. Trainer to betray the baroness's secret, and that he would never have done so if she had not in some way offended him. Probably they were right, if the malicious report that afterwards got abroad was true—that his speculation in the "The Bride of the Barricades," had not been as successful as he had been led to hope.

The drawing-room was unusually merry. One might have thought that the misfortunes of the baroness had infected the whole party with the most ridiculous spirits. This rebound from the calamities of others, which may be observed amongst even the most good-natured people, shows us how quickly individuals drop out, are dismissed, and forgotten in the whirl of life. But we mustn't stop to pick up moralities. The evening was vanishing imperceptibly (being now full half-past nine), when a servant announced that the carriage had come for Margaret. Everybody was taken by surprise, for she had not ordered her carriage till eleven; but it appeared that it had been sent by the direction of Lord Charles, a discovery which called up a sudden shadow over the face of Mr. Rawlings. Presently Crikey Snaggs glided into the room, and dropping close to his master's chair, whispered—

"He's in it—I saw him sitting behind the blind."

"Who?"

"Lord Charles himself."

"Ho! Lord Charles is below, is he?" adding aloud, "Give Mrs. Rawlings' compliments to Lord Charles Eton—regrets he should stay at the door—begs he will come up and wait till her ladyship is ready."

Crikey Snaggs, who did not hold Lord Charles in his especial love, was delighted to be charged with this message, which he did not use much ceremony in delivering.

There was a general hush and subsidence in the room. They were all aware of the terms on which Mr. Rawlings and his lordship stood towards each other, and awaited the issue in profound suspense. Margaret made a movement to leave the apartment, and anticipate any unpleasant consequences; but Mr. Rawlings would not suffer it, and had already set the general conversation again in motion, as if there was no such person as Lord Charles in question, when the door opened, and his lordship appeared upon the threshold. He looked pale and haughty, and the whiteness of his lips not only be-

trayed his passion, but the evil way in which passion affected him.

Glancing for a moment round the room, he made a ceremonious bow to Mrs. Rawlings, recognised Clara with a slight wave of his hand, and advanced at once to Margaret, without taking notice of her father.

"I am sorry, Lady Charles," he said, "to take you away from your friends; but if I had been aware you had an engagement, I should not have made arrangements for the Opera this evening."

"The Opera?" returned Margaret; "I was ignorant of your arrangements, but I am quite ready to accompany you."

She was, indeed, eager to go; anything to get Lord Charles away. But Mr. Rawlings placed his hand on her arm to hold her back, and turned to her husband.

"Do you consider it creditable, Lord Charles Eton, to make a display of the contempt in which you hold your wife's relatives, by sitting in your carriage at the door, and sending up a message by a servant for my daughter, instead of waiting upon her yourself?"

"I disclaim such an intention, sir," returned Lord Charles.

"I cannot fathom your intentions—I know you only by your acts. For myself, I despise this petty slight; but I am resolved that my family shall be treated with courtesy; and if my daughter feels what is due to herself, and to us, she will remain where she is. Your lordship is at liberty to go, or to wait her pleasure."

"Am I to understand, Mr. Rawlings," said Lord Charles, "that you step between me and my wife to estrange her from her duty?"

"Duty!" exclaimed Rawlings, looking steadily into Lord Charles's face, who affected to turn off his gaze with a supercilious frown; "yes! you have discharged *your* duty well and honestly, and like a husband to her, in trying to estrange her from her family. Have you consulted her happiness, her position, her wishes in anything? Have you not taken pains,—infinite pains,—to make her feel every hour of her life, that she was not born in your sphere? Duty!"

"Your relation to Lady Charles," replied his lordship, summoning up an expression of perfect composure, "and the roof under the shelter of

which you have the good taste to insult me, restrain me from answering this language as it deserves. I feel that I ought to apologise to your friends for an exposure of domestic matters which I have certainly not sought to provoke."

"Paltry evasion!" exclaimed Mr. Rawlings; "it is you, not I, who have published to the world the dissensions that exist between us: who made the breach and widened it, and spread abroad through every society that you have felt it necessary for your own credit to disavow your wife's family? There is not one individual known to either of us who is not familiar with every tittle of our family affairs. I have hitherto been silent, my lord; but I will spare you no longer."

"Sir," said Lord Charles, "I am indifferent to your slanders. My character is the best answer to them. Disavow your family? The supposition is absurd."

"Do you deny that you have industriously circulated amongst your friends, not by hints, and whispers, and inuendoes, but in the plainest and most offensive language, that you considered it due to your own character—a thing of starch and paint, which a shower of rain would wash into the kennel

—to hold no further intercourse with me? Do you deny this?"

"I really am at a loss to comprehend you."

"Then I will enlighten you."

During this rapid dialogue the company distributed about the room exhibited their discomfort and uneasiness in various ways. Mrs. Rawlings, at a distance behind Mr. Rawlings, was making imploring signals to Lord Charles, whenever she thought she caught his eye, in which she was generally deceived; Margaret had partially turned away, and only ventured to look timidly over her shoulder, now and then; while Clara and Mr. Farquhar sat apart, revolving the matrimonial disclosures in their own minds, and thinking, doubtless, what a very different sort of life they should lead when they were married. Lord Clickerly considered it good fun, and Mr. Trainer stood scrutinizing the group with morose eyes and beetling brows. Mr. Trumbull alone took a direct and active interest in what was going forward, and drawing over his chair leaned out, with his elbows on his knees, to watch the progress of the scene, with a view to make a chapter of it in his book on the social manners and customs of the English.

"Then I will enlighten you," exclaimed Mr. Rawlings, drawing a letter from his pocket; "here is a letter you wrote to the Earl of Dragonfelt—ah! I see you remember it—in which you volunteer an opinion upon transactions between his lordship and myself, of many years' standing, and of the merits of which you were as ignorant as the sheet of paper on which you wrote, begging of his lordship to believe that you entirely disapproved of my conduct, and that, indeed, you—you!—had already broken off all personal intercourse with me."

"By what means did you become possessed of that letter?" demanded Lord Charles.

"By what right, sir, did you presume to thrust yourself into my affairs?"

"By the right, sir, which every gentleman is justified in asserting—the right of vindicating my own honour."

"Your honour!—cobwebs!—what had your honour to do with my business?"

"Simply this, that I am connected with you, although I *do* hold no intercourse with you, and that I will not suffer the shadow of a suspicion to fall upon my name from any act of yours. You take advantage of the power which the law places in your

hands to hunt down a noble family, and, without giving them time to enter into any arrangements for the preservation of their property, you turn them out of their estates, and embitter the declining age of a nobleman of irreproachable character. The law was designed for the protection of honest men, not to abet the practices of usurers and money-jobbers."

"Pray economise your clap-traps for the reporters' gallery," retorted Mr. Rawlings; "they are lost here. Again I ask you, why you presumed to interfere between me and the Earl of Dragonfelt!"

"I will not answer you further. I am not called upon to explain any part of my conduct to you. It is enough that I feel justified to myself in having expressed my abhorrence of a proceeding which must fill every honourable mind with indignation."

"Who told you this fine story about taking advantage of the law? Where did you pick it up? Did you stop to ask whether the Earl of Dragonfelt had done anything on his side to provoke this extreme measure? I grant you it is an extreme measure; but the law which was designed for the protection of honest men, as you say, calls for extreme measures in extreme cases, and sanctifies them by the name of justice. It will hang extreme

villains sometimes, and I do not find that people write to their families to express their abhorrence. Did you ask anybody how long this mortgage had hung over the Dragonfelt estates? What indulgences I had already given? What scorn and insult I had endured from the man whose credit and station I had saved at a critical moment? Did you inquire whether that respectable old nobleman had returned my forbearance with treachery, and condescended, through his agents and hirelings, to bribe my servants, in the hope of getting at my private papers? Did your honourable mind make any of these inquiries before it took upon itself to abhor my proceedings?"

"Most unquestionably I never dreamt of making any such inquiries."

"Yet, wholly ignorant of the circumstances, you assumed to yourself the right of pronouncing an opinion upon my actions; and this you call asserting the right of a gentleman! Why, the earl himself, who is as cunning as a serpent, and as sharp-eyed as a ferret, must read your fawning parasite character through and through, and despise you as heartily as I do. You thought it a grand thing to stand well with your order, to show a generous sympathy for a

ruined lord. Had he been a man who had built up his own fortune, like me, you would have let him rot in the mire before you would have opened your lips to utter one word, unless it were a word of opprobrium. Lord Charles Eton, we must understand each other better henceforth—let the distance between us be clear, wide, and impassable—be careful how you advance one step upon it.”

“ I will not interchange scurrility with you, sir; you are free to use those weapons of vulgar abuse at which I confess my inferiority. The distance between us *is* impassable; and I am only too happy to feel myself relieved for the rest of my life by the gross outrage you have committed upon me, from exercising any further delicacy towards you. But, before I leave you, I again demand by what means that letter came into your possession ! ”

“ For what reason do you make that demand? Do you suppose I came by it surreptitiously? ”

“ I do. I know more of your history than you suspect; and can readily believe that a man who could turn a deathbed confidence to his own ends—the deathbed of his benefactor—is eminently capable of surreptitious practices. Come, Lady Charles, my arm is at your service.”

As he spoke, his face whitening with gall—he offered his arm to Margaret; but his last words had taken so strange an effect on Richard Rawlings, who seemed overwhelmed by astonishment rather than shame or anger, that she stood gazing in fear and irresolution upon her father, hardly aware of the action of Lord Charles. His lordship again proffered his arm to her in silence, but she did not observe him—her eyes were rivetted upon her father's face, in which, for the interval of a second that elapsed during this movement, there was an incomprehensible expression of mixed surprise and hesitation, as if he were trying to gather up memories of things forgotten, and to trace their connexion with the dark allusion of Lord Charles. But his lordship was not disposed to wait the result, and, withdrawing his extended arm, muttered in a low voice to Lady Charles, "Perhaps you will follow me," and left the room.

This sudden action recalled her to a full consciousness of her situation. Mrs. Rawlings and Clara came to her, apparently to prevail upon her to stay a little longer, till she had recovered from the agitation into which this painful scene had thrown her. She looked like a person awakening from a dream—a

heavy stupor seemed to have locked up her senses—and when it passed away, she made a violent effort to collect herself for the struggle it was necessary to make.

“No—no,” she whispered, “no—no—I must not stay—my duty lies there—God bless you! mother!—sister!—He shall have nothing to reproach me with—I will speak to him alone—and if it comes to parting, it must be clear and open, and before the world—not thus—not thus!”

As she went towards the door, two or three of the gentlemen hastened forward to attend her, but she waved them back, and went out alone.

When she was gone, everybody was standing about the room with an air of embarrassment.

“I am sorry our little party should have been so unluckily broken in upon,” said Mr. Rawlings; “pray be seated, gentlemen.”

“As far as I can judge,” observed Mr. Trumbull, “there’s no occasion to repent it. It was a noble manifestation on your part, Mr. Rawlings; and in the name of every free-born man I must tender you my gratitude for your magnificent vindication of the rights of the many against the usurpation of the few. That’s the way I look at it. Reduced to its ele-

ments, in a popular sense, it was a complete triumph of democracy over aristocracy, and no mistake; and I reckon if we had you in Congress, we'd make everlasting smash of the fine people in our country that ape the exclusive views of your society. The fact is, Mr. Rawlings, these marriages never come to good. 'The graft won't take; and you'll never have a wholesome state of things in this country till you clear the snags out of the water, and let the current of industry free—the live human tide, that must go boiling down, whether you like it or not; it's a fact that, if you attempt to dam it up by unnatural impediments, it will burst the banks at last. You may set that down as an eternal truth, Mr. Rawlings."

This speech was delivered chiefly into the ear of Mr. Rawlings, who was standing close to him; but there was no time for a reply. The guests were already taking their leave, and half way out of the room.

As they were retiring, Mr. Rawlings drew Mr. Farquhar back. "Let them go," he said; "I wish to have a few words alone with you to-night."

CHAPTER VI.

THE LOVER AND THE HUSBAND.

To what conclusion the conference between Henry Winston and Mr. Costigan finally led, it would have been difficult for either of them to determine with any exactitude. It left so complicated a network of crude strategies in their brains the next morning, that no one particular point could be said to be more clear or satisfactory than another. Strange, indeed, would it have been had it turned out otherwise; for it surpassed even the ingenuity of Mr. Costigan to discover any justifiable pretext Mr. Henry Winston could set up to himself for making an onslaught on Lord Charles Eton. The more they sifted the matter, the more obvious it became that he had no right whatever to interfere with his lordship; and that, indeed, he could not very well do so without giving his lordship a direct advantage, with all the respect-

able sympathies to back him, and exposing himself to the risk of failure and derision. Henry Winston allowed himself reluctantly to be convinced of this at last. He felt that his first impetuous notion of calling his lordship to account for his conduct to his wife, or making it in any way an excuse for picking a quarrel with him, had a remarkably awkward resemblance to breaking into his lordship's house. But, although he relinquished that boyish view of the case, and saw the necessity of dealing with Lord Charles on independent grounds,—a necessity forced upon him by a careful consideration of the respect that was due to Margaret,—he by no means relinquished his fixed determination to throw himself in his lordship's way, and leave the rest to chance.

For several days he made a diligent promenade in the neighbourhood of the clubs, and through the streets where he thought it likely he should fall in with his lordship. But he might have exercised himself in this way for twenty years, and not have met the man he wanted. He might miss him twenty times a day by the breadth of a brick at the corners of streets, or by the shadow on a shop-threshold, or by taking the wrong side of the street, or by looking in at a window, or looking round when he ought to

look straight before him. Pins in bundles of hay are not more obstinate in their whereabouts than gentlemen who are looked after, without knowing it, in the streets of London. Day after day passed over in this fruitless search; although once he thought he saw Lord Charles in a cabriolet, and ran after it up and down several streets till he overtook it, and had the satisfaction of discovering that it contained a fat man who didn't bear the slightest resemblance to the gentleman he was in search of.

How little Lady Charles, in the solitude of her dismal house, suspected that there was a young man going about town all day long looking for her husband, with dire intent more haggard than his looks! We wonder did it chance to her in any of those solitary hours, when the heart is so apt to live over its old memories again, to expend a thought upon Henry Winston? Did she ask herself how the estrangement, and sudden eclipse of his love came about, and think, with a shuddering doubt, that she ought to have cleared it up before she raised a barrier between them for ever? And it was now too late for repentance, too early for doubts! If she did, if she yearned with regret towards the past, and looked with dark misgivings on the present

and the future, who was to blame? Her husband, at least, who should have obliterated all such feelings, instead of leaving them to prey upon her in loneliness and desertion, had no right to complain of the change they wrought in her.

One night, Henry Winston, weary of a wretched day of disappointments, wandered into the Opera, with the same object incessantly before him. The lustre of the scene, the buzz of voices, the stories of whole lives in their spring and decay, revealed in the fluctuating incidents that marked the movements of the surrounding groups, not a stir of which escaped him, recalled with many keen and bitter pangs the evening when he had last visited this very place with the man whom, of all the world, he now most wished to encounter. Several times he fancied he saw him—but was still disappointed. It was growing late; he had scrutinized every box, ran eagerly over every head in the stalls, with the same result, when his attention was attracted by the opening of a box, which had been hitherto vacant, on the grand tier. A lady and gentleman entered. The gentleman came quickly to the front, and glanced with an appearance of impatience about the house. Henry Winston knew him by instinct,

before he recognised a feature in his face. It was Lord Charles Eton at last! The turn of his shoulder, the easy grace and confidence of his action, and that calm, statuesque face and sculptured shirt, could not be mistaken. Henry Winston's heart bounded as if the blood in it were leaping to get free. In a moment or two a lady, who had lingered at the back of the box, advanced slowly to the seat looking towards the stage, and drawing the curtain forward, took a chair behind it. Her face was almost wholly screened from the audience, and her figure, muffled in a large white cloak, could not be sufficiently made out to help the speculations of the watcher below. Henry Winston fixed his glass upon the box, and did not lose an articulation of those who sat in it.

For some time the lady was motionless, while Lord Charles was scanning the circles and scattering about recognitions from the tips of his fingers. They didn't exchange a word. At length Lord Charles flung himself back in his chair, and, although Henry could not see his face, he felt that he was speaking. The lady moved a little forward—she was fluttered, and pushing aside the curtain, apparently to avoid the conversation, turned her

face towards the audience. The light of the old enchantment fell once more upon Henry Winston! There was a great change—the pallor of a death-sickness was in her cheeks, and her eyes betrayed an expression of profound sadness; yet still there was the same sweetness, the same entrancing beauty, he remembered so well. With a wild tumult of emotions he sat and gazed upon her, intently observing the progress of the dialogue which was going forward. Lord Charles was speaking with considerable emphasis, twitching his glass backwards and forwards, sometimes stooping out over the box, and sometimes standing up, by way of making a pantomime to perplex the scrutiny of inquisitive *lorgnettes*; but Henry Winston could see that he was speaking vehemently all the time, and the most vehemently when he desired to appear most unconcerned. Sometimes Margaret turned and spoke—once with marked animation; and then Lord Charles, after an energetic movement in the shadow at the back, suddenly left the box. When he was gone, Margaret bustled a little with her fan, then laid it down, and hid herself again behind the curtain. Henry Winston caught a glimpse of a white handkerchief, and fancied she was in tears.

There was not much time for reflection. If he had followed his first impulse upon seeing Margaret alone, Henry Winston would have instantly gone to her box; but one fatal thought rose before him, like a spectre, and warned him to take any direction but that. He recoiled from it with a shudder, such as one undergoes who tears himself from the edge of a gulf whose sightless depth had fascinated him to frenzy. The feeling of despair with which he turned from that sight, where every hope of his life was withered, imparted increased intensity to the eagerness with which he now looked round for Lord Charles. That satisfaction, at least, mad and wretched as it was, still remained to him. The consummation of the revenge he had sleeplessly nourished was at hand, and he had not long to wait for it. Before he had even time to collect himself, or determine what course he should take on meeting Lord Charles, his lordship appeared in the lounge within a few yards of him, looking as cool and *insouciant* as if nothing in the world had lately happened to ruffle his tranquillity.

A mist passed over Henry Winston's eyes—the house seemed to swim round him; the intolerable calmness with which Lord Charles sauntered through

the crowd, aggravated his offences tenfold. Had he shown a tinge of emotion when they met,—as they did all at once, face to face,—Henry Winston might have felt it as a rebuke to the violent passion that agitated him; but there was not the slightest change in his lordship's face, except a faint and somewhat lofty expression of surprise.

“Ha! Winston!” exclaimed Lord Charles, “how d’ye do? What has become of you all this time? How d’ye do, Forrester—how d’ye do?”

“I have looked eagerly for this meeting, Lord Charles Eton,” cried Winston; “things have happened since we met last that have altered our positions towards each other.”

“Things are happening every day, my dear Winston,” returned Lord Charles, “that alter everybody’s position. Very true, as you say”—here his lordship nodded, with a most gracious smile, to a lady on the grand tier—“I don’t think I have seen you since my—marriage.”

“No—it was a subject upon which you were not very likely to wish to see me.”

“And why not? Still as sentimental as ever? My dear Winston, you must be more a man of the world. You shall positively come and see us.”

"My lord!" exclaimed Winston, "I'm not in a humour to be jested with. I have sought you, Lord Charles Eton, and my purpose is with you in private. Let us retire from this place."

"Retire, Winston? Quite impossible. Lady Charles is up-stairs—there, go and talk to her; and if you wish for a private scene with me, you shall have it whenever you please to honour me with a visit. Lady Charles will be delighted to see you, and I promise you I sha'n't be jealous in the least.'

At this moment Lord Charles had got into a crush of people he knew, and in the pressure Henry Winston was separated from him. He was bewildered by the indifference and frankness of his lordship's accomplished manner; and the open invitation to visit Lady Charles took him by surprise, and directed the current of his thoughts into a new channel. The temptation was too great to be resisted. Whatever reception he might meet from Margaret, he could, at all events, plead her husband's sanction for intruding upon her, and he would gain the opportunity, for which his wayward love had long panted, of speaking to her, and getting some explanation of the mystery in the darkness of which they had been so strangely sundered.

This was sweeter to him than vengeance—which, after all, it only postponed, perhaps to heighten and refine its zest.

He was not very well acquainted with the lobbies of the house, but love is a keen guide through the most difficult labyrinths. Arrived at the door of the box, he hesitated for a moment, and when the boxkeeper came to his help and opened it, he felt himself trembling violently. Lady Charles was the first to speak. She did not recognise him till he came near the front.

“Mr. Winston!”—there was a slight convulsion in her voice, but she controlled it, and drawing herself quietly up, waited for an explanation.

“You are surprised to see me,” said Henry; “but not more surprised than I am to find myself here.”

“I am sorry Lord Charles is not here to receive you.”

“It was Lord Charles who desired me to come. I should not otherwise have ventured to intrude upon you. I feel, Lady Charles, that I have no right to ask a few minutes’ conversation—perhaps I ought not—but there is something due to past memories—to present suffering—I entreat you to for-

give me if I say one word which I ought not to utter in the altered circumstances under which we meet."

"I cannot believe, Mr. Winston, that you could say anything I ought not to hear."

"When we last parted, there were pledges between us——"

"Upon that subject I cannot—will not—hear you."

"Well—I will only speak of it as a matter gone by, in which neither of us have any further interest than to clear up doubts that, so far as I am concerned, render my life miserable. I could not have sustained myself up to this hour, only in the hope that some day I should have from your own lips an explanation——"

"You amaze me. Explanation?"

"I beg it from you as the one solitary favour I shall ever have to seek in this world from her who——" his voice faltered.

"This is unreasonable—unjust; it is wrong, Mr. Winston—I cannot suffer it," said Margaret.

"Do not fear," returned Henry; "I know what is due to your position, and will not compromise it. When we parted—I ask this to ease me of a

load of wretchedness that presses upon me day and night—a few words, and it will all be over—we had promised each other—no matter! you remember all that—I will hasten to the end—your father insisted upon this marriage—well, I wrote to you—I believed then that your heart was mine——”

“To what end is this?” cried Margaret.

“I proposed the only alternative open to us—that you should fly with me. I sent that letter by your sister.”

Margaret looked confused, as if she did not quite understand him.

“What letter?”

“Two days after your father desired you to receive Lord Charles Eton.”

“No—no—you are mistaken—you forget—you never sent me such a letter—no—no——”

“Try to recollect—you are agitated. I mentioned that I should wait for you in the Park. You remember?”

“No—you are confounding things. I never heard of such a letter. Sent to me by Clara?”

“Endeavour to recal the circumstance. I waited at the appointed spot. It will be clear to you, if you can remember the morning when you drove

out with your father and Lord Charles. You recollect?"

"Let me think. Yes—I do remember that morning—but nothing about you."

"I entreat you to look back and think—did you not see me? Waiting with a carriage? Think—think—what horrible mystery is this?"

"Never—I never saw you—never heard of such a letter."

"What fiend has done this? I saw you as plainly as I see you now—and I believed you came to mock and humiliate me. And it was not so?"

"It was not so," returned Margaret, in a voice almost inarticulate; "no—I heard nothing from you—I was led to believe that you had left the country—I heard other things—but I believed in nothing but your silence. That was enough, and it closed all between us. We must speak no more on this subject; and I should not have said so much, but that I would not have you think me capable of doing a wrong to you or others. Be satisfied and leave me."

"Great God!" exclaimed Harry, "could your sister have suppressed the letter? She had it, and knew its contents—and knew the misery I was

enduring—slight to what I have endured since, and to the horrors of the future. And this marriage followed, without bringing you happiness, while it consigns me to despair!”

“I cannot listen to such language. Happiness! We must seek for happiness in the discharge of our duties. You have the explanation you desired—resignation and hope must be sought elsewhere—not here—not in conversations like these—and now leave me—leave me. Lord Charles is in the pit. He is looking up—had you not better rejoin him?”

“I will,” cried Henry Winston; “if I have given you pain, forgive me—Margaret! There, it is the last time. If you should ever think of me after this night—think kindly of me. God! my heart will break!” and he rushed out of the box.

As ill fortune would have it, he met Lord Charles in one of the passages. The wild expression of his face startled his lordship, who rarely suffered himself to be betrayed into astonishment at anything.

“Why, my dear Winston,” exclaimed his lordship, “what is the matter?”

“Come this way, Lord Charles Eton,” retorted the other, “and I will tell you.”

“Why can’t you tell me here?”

"We shall be more private this way," cried Winston, drawing him towards the extremity of the passage, where it was comparatively dark and retired.

"I told you," he continued, "that I sought this interview with you."

"Well, I am here. What is your object?"

"To tell you that you have availed yourself of your rank, your station, your influence to undermine your friend, and blast his prospects. To tell you that your conduct to me has been base and treacherous; and to demand from you that satisfaction which, as a gentleman, I have a right to seek at your hands for the wrong you have done me."

"Come, come," returned Lord Charles, "this is sheer idiocy, Mr. Winston. I beg you will explain what you mean?"

"Explain? It ought to be explicit enough. I brand you, Lord Charles Eton, with falsehood and treachery. You have done me a wrong that cries out for atonement, and must be satisfied. It is useless to shift and equivocate. I know your subtle and devilish nature well—but you shall not escape me. Give me an answer, if you would not provoke me to extremities."

"Give way, sir, and let me pass. If you have any demand to make upon me, seek a proper opportunity."

"Coward!" exclaimed Winston, wrought upon to a height of ungovernable rage, "will nothing move your stagnant blood!" then drawing his hand violently, he struck him on the face, at the same moment flinging his card upon the ground.

The incident caused a slight commotion amongst a few gentlemen who witnessed the latter part of the rencontre. One of them stepped forward, and, picking up the card, handed it to Lord Charles Eton. In the mean while, Henry Winston had passed out rapidly into the street.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

AS YOU SOW, YOU MUST REAP.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

CHAPTER I.

CONTAINING CONFIDENTIAL DISCLOSURES.

"MR. FARQUHAR," said Richard Rawlings, when they found themselves alone after the departure of Trumbull and the rest of the guests, "I wish to consult you on a business that affects me nearly, and hope you will be open and frank with me."

Mr. Farquhar was a man of few words, and on most occasions listened rather than spoke. There was something in Mr. Rawlings' manner which led him to suppose that the communication related to Clara; and being desirous of hearing what Mr. Rawlings had to say before he committed himself, he answered by a slight inclination of his head.

"What I want is a sincere opinion," continued

Rawlings, "without any reserve or delicacy on my account?"

Mr. Farquhar made a second inclination of his head.

"You heard what Lord Charles Eton said just before he left the room?"

"I did," returned Farquhar, somewhat relieved, and at the same time, perhaps, a little disappointed.

"In what sense did you understand it? Should you, as a dispassionate person, regard it as an accusation, or merely an inuendo?"

"Certainly," replied Farquhar, after a moment's pause, "as an accusation."

"That I had taken advantage of a deathbed confidence for my own purposes?"

"It appeared to me so."

"Do you believe it?"

"You can hardly expect me to answer that question. If you ask me whether I believe you capable of such an act, I have no hesitation in saying that I do not."

"If you do not believe me capable of it, you must surely discredit the charge?"

"That by no means follows, Mr. Rawlings. Here is an alleged matter of fact, of the truth or falsehood

of which it is impossible for me to know anything. A particular charge cannot be rebutted by merely opposing to it a general reputation."

"Then no man is safe in standing upon his character?"

"Certainly not, when a specific allegation is made against him."

"And, although a man's life were as pure as the life of an angel, he must defend himself whenever malice or slander may choose to assail him?"

"Such a man owes it to society no less than to himself. It will not do to say, 'My life is an answer to all calumnies.' No man's life is known."

"I am glad to have your opinion on this point, for it exactly coincides with my own. You think I ought to disprove this charge?"

"I see no alternative."

"Your counsel is sound and clear, and relieves me of some serious scruples I had in reference to others whom I would rather not have compromised. I can prove this charge to be base and groundless, but considering the weightier affairs in which I am engaged before the public, I confess I have a reluctance to go into a court of justice with my son-in-law."

"Such a proceeding is not to be contemplated, Mr. Rawlings. The matter simply requires an explanation through a mutual friend."

"Will you be that friend? I do not affect any hesitation in asking you. Will you undertake to see Lord Charles?"

"If you think I——"

"To your prudence and discretion I would gladly confide my vindication; and if you have no personal objection——"

"Oh! none whatever. But you must furnish me with the means of disproving the statement."

"Not in the first instance. Lord Charles has made an assertion—it is for him to establish it. By throwing him upon his proofs we shall get at the source of the slander, and I may be spared the necessity of opening up matters which I do not feel myself at liberty to disclose, except as a last resource."

"You are the best judge of that; but I must have some particulars to go upon. Was there ever such a deathbed confidence as he spoke of?"

"Suppose there had been, how could Lord Charles, or anybody else, know the nature of it?"

"Subsequent circumstances, perhaps, might have thrown a light upon it."

“ But there were none—not a single circumstance that could afford the slightest clue to the subject of that confidence.”

“ Then there *was* such a confidence, Mr. Rawlings?”

Richard Rawlings saw at once that a shadow of doubt had fallen on Mr. Farquhar's mind, and that having gone so far, it was necessary to go farther. Resting his head on one hand, as if he were collecting himself, and thinking how he should shape his disclosure, after a little while he commenced, slowly and deliberately—

“ I began the world in a struggle for bread. My first knowledge of life was want, hardship, and oppression. I saw others of my own age, with no better natural title to a happy destiny, fostered by household affections, and strengthened by the love of kindred, for the careers that lay before them. There was not one human face into which I could look for sympathy. Poverty is comparatively a small evil when it is tempered by the consolations of home; but I had no home. I was thrown upon the world to live or die as I might. I fought for life alone—utterly alone from childhood—everybody was privileged to trample upon me; and they did trample

upon me, and crushed at the outset the yearnings of my heart, and all its youthful and hopeful instincts. While I was yet a boy, a child—with a child's longing desires, and dreams of holidays—the weight of years had fallen upon me in a scourge of drudgery that turned the child's blood to gall. Thus I began—you see to what I have raised myself."

"An instructive history, Mr. Rawlings," returned Farquhar; "honourable to your industry and perseverance."

"Simply the result of circumstances, that left me no choice but self-reliance. My character, for good or evil, was formed in the friendless isolation which showed me that I had nothing to depend upon but my own exertions, and no hope of rendering life supportable but by carving out an independence. My whole energies were concentrated upon that object. No pleasures tempted me aside; no ties encumbered me; I had neither attachments to distract my efforts, nor burdens to impede them. Well—it was at the very opening of my life the circumstance occurred to which Lord Charles alluded. My employer—not my benefactor, as he called him—was dying. I had served him as all drudges serve their task-masters, worked thanklessly for him, and was

ground down to the bare point of subsistence, without any recompense in the way of kindness or encouragement, for he was mean at heart, suspicious, and tyrannical. But when he came near his end, the wretched miser was so naked of friends that he turned to me, whom he had treated like a dog, as the only person he could trust with a secret that was labouring in his mind. It was his secret, and not mine, and I have no right to divulge it except in my own defence. I undertook a duty he enjoined upon me, and I have discharged it, not merely to the letter, as some men might have done, but have exceeded the measure of his injunction ten times over. So far, Mr. Farquhar, you are in possession of all the facts necessary for you at present, and you have my authority to state that the allegation which charges me with having abused that man's confidence is a gratuitous and malignant falsehood. Are you satisfied?"

"Perfectly."

"When do you propose to see his lordship?"

"The sooner the better. To-morrow."

"There is something more I wish to say. You place me under an obligation by this service, and I thank you for it. Is there no way, Mr. Farquhar, by which I can render you a return?"

"You overrate the service, Mr. Rawlings. It is too slight to call for a return."

"Not slight to me. I will have no disguise with you. I look round amongst the large circle of people who from time to time pressed their services upon me *when I didn't want them*, and I could not now pick out one who would incur the risk of appearing publicly as my friend. They shrink from me as if I were spotted with leprosy. You can comprehend, then, how much I prize the support of an honourable man at a moment when the world, that flattered and caressed me a few weeks ago, is loading me with obloquy."

"I should think very meanly of that man's friendship, Mr. Rawlings," returned Farquhar, "who showed it only in the sunshine. As for myself, I really am entitled to no thanks—I beg you will not consider it in that light."

"You enhance the obligation, Mr. Farquhar, by making it appear so trivial. Come—be as frank with me as I have been with you. I am anxious to testify to you the value I place upon your friendship."

"The expression of such a desire is grateful to my feelings, but——"

“But? We shall never get to the end of our business if we are to be stopped by buts. I suppose I must speak plainly. The happiness of my daughter is not an object to which I can be indifferent; and if you, too, are interested in it, why are you not more explicit with me?”

“Explicit?—I——”

“Am I right in my conjecture?”

“Since you have alluded to the subject, it would not become me to deal otherwise than openly with you, Mr. Rawlings. It was my intention to have spoken to you, and to have asked your sanction—but—I was unwilling to trespass upon you at a time when I knew you were harassed by other matters. Your considerate kindness has relieved me from that apprehension. It is true, sir, that I am interested in the happiness of your daughter, and want only your approval to give me a title to make her happiness the business of my life.”

“I should not have led you to this confession, if I intended to withhold my approval. You are not one of the common herd of men who are carried away by hasty impressions, or who hunt women for their fortunes. I will not ask you whether you have maturely reflected upon this step. I give you credit in

advance for acting with good sense as well as good feeling; and it is for that reason that I desire to be perfectly candid with you before we go any farther. My position, Mr. Farquhar, is altered since you first came to this house. Do not be deceived upon that point. My resources are crippled. The rich man of yesterday may be a beggar to-morrow."

"Such a calamity would be a source of infinite regret to me—but it would make no change in my feelings towards your daughter. Perhaps it might bind me the more strongly to her."

"I never could have expected this kind of romance from Mr. Farquhar," observed Richard Rawlings, smiling.

"Say reason rather than romance. I fell in love with Miss Rawlings, not with her expectancies; and I am happy to say that my own fortune renders me independent of such considerations."

"And you should not be disappointed if you discovered that this young lady, with whom your reason had fallen in love, the daughter of a reputed *millionaire*, should turn out to have no fortune after all?"

"The truth is, I never made any calculations about it, simply because I had no necessity. If fortune

comes, as an incident, it is welcome; but as the main plot of the drama, I have long learned to consider it extremely liable to break down. We live for better things than money, Mr. Rawlings; and I have seen enough of the world to be satisfied that the wealthiest house does not always ensure the happiest home."

"You have learned that piece of wisdom in good time. May it prosper with you!" exclaimed Rawlings, with an emotion which slightly trembled in his voice. "You are right. There are better things to live for—love, respect, repose. I have wrung this lesson from the world, which you have calmly gathered from observation. It has come late—but not too late to profit something by it. All is not lost yet. In Clara's happiness we shall find some compensation for the wreck of poor Margaret's life. There went ambition—and how has it ended? Misery, masked by rank and fortune. I know it. But, you will ask, why, with my knowledge of mankind, I sacrificed my child? I will tell you why. I hated the conventional pride that looks down with contempt upon obscure birth and its upward struggles; and it became a passion with me to raise myself to a height that would enable me to

subdue it to my own ends. In that marriage I accomplished my desire: let ruin come, I have plucked out the purple sin, and shown its hollowness to the world. Could you heap my floors with gold, Mr. Farquhar, it would be a less satisfaction to me now, than you will bestow upon me by making Clara happy. Your hand—thanks, and good night. We are not quite beggared yet. Gold has done its work, and we will look, as you say, for something better and worthier to live for. Love each other, be true and trustful,—keep your minds healthy and your hearts pure,—and you will be richer a hundred-fold upon a crust than if a mine were casting up its treasures at your feet.”

Thus ended the interview, supplying Mr. Farquhar with much strange matter for reflection. Revolving in his thoughts all that Mr. Rawlings had revealed to him, and taking into account the frank tone of his disclosures, the extraordinary career they mapped out, and the sound sense and even excellent feeling he displayed, considerably heightened in the appreciation by his unexpected kindness about Clara, Mr. Farquhar upon the whole formed a higher opinion of Mr. Rawlings than he had ever entertained before. He believed that there lay a

better nature under that hard and repulsive exterior than the world had given him credit for; and he was disposed to conclude that the accusations which had been brought against him in his public capacity were at least greatly exaggerated. He was very willing to believe the best. He had a direct interest in putting a most favourable construction on Mr. Rawlings' character, and in helping to vindicate it from aspersion.

There was an ingredient also in the circumstances in which he was placed that was peculiarly attractive to a man of Mr. Farquhar's turn of mind. Richard Rawlings, whatever dark spots there might have been in his life, was paying a heavy penalty for them,—shunned by his former parasites,—and now, probably, as much a bankrupt in fortune as in reputation. That was not the moment to desert him. Mr. Farquhar fancied he could see through all that bravery of speech the ruin that was closing rapidly upon him, and over which his self-sustaining pride had, after all, thrown but a thin veil. He suspected that Rawlings' affairs were in a more desperate condition than he would suffer himself to acknowledge. There was altogether a sort of fascination in the adversity of a man who had single-

handed elevated himself to a pinnacle of power and influence such as few men, backed by the greatest opportunities and advantages, had ever attained. He recognised a certain grandeur in his rise that flung its broad light over his fall, and invested it with special interest. And in addition to the motives which thus led him to feel a deep anxiety in the troubles that were gathering round one whose prosperity he had to some extent participated in, his attachment for Clara suggested a reason more powerful than all the rest for showing himself at this crisis as the stanch friend of the family. He was the only friend they had, after all the pomp and splendour they had wasted in the cultivation of troops upon troops of fine acquaintances.

The next morning Mr. Farquhar stood on the threshold of his door, hesitating whether he should go down the street or up the street—his heart pointing one way and his head looking the other—or rather his heart pointing both ways at once, for it was charged with much latent kindness, and was as well-inclined to do a service to Mr. Rawlings, as to render suit and homage on that happy morning to Clara. The truth was, he hesitated whether he should go to Clara, and announce the joyous tidings

that he had obtained her father's consent, or in the first instance see Lord Charles and discharge his promise to Mr. Rawlings. But the former seemed to give a selfish preference to his own feelings, and he accordingly took the direction that led to Portman-square, thinking all the way, we are reluctant to admit, more of the delight with which Clara would receive his news, than of the reception he was likely to get from Lord Charles Eton.

CHAPTER II.

FULL OF BELLICOSE MATTER.

A HEAVY fog brooded over the streets of London. It was a brown fog with streaks of dingy yellow in it. To all external appearance the flags were quite dry, but you felt that you were looking at them through a false medium, and that the atmosphere around you was loaded with invisible water, held in suspense by the mysterious chemistry of Nature. You expected every moment that it would begin to rain, but it did not rain for all that. The shops, as you passed along, loomed upon you like strange outlines and confused colours heaving in a mirage. Wherever there was a light within (for although it was yet scarcely noon almost every shop was lighted up) it was exaggerated into a great red blaze, with a rim round it that baffled speculation, and filled the eyes with unintelligible shapes flickering in the dim and

greasy twilight. The lamp-posts puzzled you with a series of grotesque deceptions. Sometimes they seemed miles off, then all of a sudden you struck against one of them. Sometimes they palpitated in the murky air; sometimes they ran up into the sky, as if they had the tenuity of a wire, and were undergoing a process of stretching; and sometimes they shrunk down before you and vanished into the earth. Under any circumstances, you would never have taken them for lamp-posts, and it was only when you felt the thick dew upon the cold iron, and assured yourself of their identity by the help of a foregone conclusion, that the fact became evident to your reason rather than your senses.

It was one of those mornings that very often occur in London, and never anywhere else: one of those mornings that foreigners never can comprehend from description, and that Englishmen are equally at a loss to describe. The fog was swaying backwards and forwards against the windows of the houses, and darkening the interiors so effectually that the inhabitants were obliged to breakfast by candlelight. It was worse than the absolute darkness of midnight, for it did not allow fair play to the rays of lamps or candles, catching them up and flinging them about

in a manner so lurid and fantastic as to produce the most bewildering confusion in corners and shadowy places. Under the influence of this dreary, tantalising fog, two gentlemen sat at a table covered with the wrecks of eggs and other *débris* of a bachelor's breakfast, with a pair of candles between them that threw out into strong relief, somewhat like a picture of Schalcken's, the anxious expression of their faces. One of them was Henry Winston, and the other was his friend and adviser, Mr. Michael Costigan.

Mr. Costigan was evidently rather put out by the information Henry Winston had just communicated to him. Winston, breaking through all bounds of prudence and etiquette, and acting on the mad impulse of the moment, had effectually done that which Costigan had advised him all along carefully to avoid, and had thereby placed himself in the wrong. Nothing would have been easier, according to Costigan, than to have thrown the *onus* on Lord Charles, so that he should have been made answerable for any consequences that might have ensued. Costigan clearly looked upon duelling as one of the Fine Arts, in which enthusiasm was an excellent ingredient when it was governed by strictly scientific principles; and being perfectly cool and dispassionate

in all affairs of that kind himself, he was not disposed to make much allowance for hasty errors or want of tact in others.

"You have committed an egregious blunder, my young fellow," he cried; "an unpardonable blunder. Nothing can satisfy a blow but a shot. You must fight him."

"I know it," replied Winston.

"It's just as well, since it must be so, that you go into it with a good heart; and it'll be a comfort for you to feel that there isn't a man in the three kingdoms can humbug Mick Costigan in a business of the sort. I'll put you up to two or three secrets; but mind, once I take it into my own hands, you've nothing more to say to it. The principal's nobody—it's the second that has the responsibility upon his shoulders. Mind that."

"I am aware of it," returned Winston; "but before we go any farther, I should like to know what you intend to do."

"What I intend to do! Now, what is it to you what I intend to do? Mind your own business, and just leave me to mine."

"That's all very well," said Henry, reddening, and showing symptoms of impatience at the mystery

of high art in which Costigan indulged; "but as I have some little interest in the result, I am entitled to know beforehand how you mean to proceed."

"For what reason, will you tell me? Do you think I'm so ignorant of my office that it's necessary for me to consult you? Because if you do, the sooner I throw it up the better, and the best thing you can do is to be your own second. What would you think of that now, by way of variety?"

"No—no, I don't mean that."

"Then what *do* you mean? I'd advise you to be quick, for it's past twelve, and unless his lordship is going to show the white feather, you may expect to hear from him immediately."

"What I mean is this," returned Winston, "that if you are to act for me, you must understand my feelings. I will consent to no apology, Costigan. Let what may happen, I will never make an apology to that man."

"And who's asking you? Apology? Whoo! Mick Costigan make an apology? If it wasn't for the circumstances you're in, and that I've a regard for you, I'd take it as a personal insult to suspect me of making an apology. Did you ever hear of a man whistling jigs to a milestone? Upon my

honour, Mr. Winston, it would be just as profitable an occupation as trying to wheedle an apology out of Mick Costigan."

"Well—I am satisfied—and for the rest, I put myself in your hands. What are we to do?"

"Nothing. Keep yourself quiet, that's all you've got to do; and when his lordship's friend calls upon you, don't enter into any particulars at all, but refer him to me. Let him appoint his own time and place, and I'll do myself the pleasure of waiting upon him. And mind, there must be no delay. Half an hour from the time he leaves you I'll be with him. Was that a knock?"

Henry Winston ran to the window, and looked down through the yellow-brown fog, but could distinguish nothing in the street below.

"It was somebody," he exclaimed; "they have opened the door."

"Asy, asy," cried Costigan; "just throw yourself on the sofa, and take up a book. Hem! Come in. Ri-tol-lol-de-rol."

There was a gentle tap at the door, and presently Mrs. Stubbs entered with a card. It would be difficult to say whether she suspected anything, or whether she thought the card was charged with

gunpowder, for at all times she had a knowing and inquiring look that suggested the notion of sinister curiosity; but upon this occasion it was rather more marked and penetrating than usual, as she handed the card to Henry Winston, and alternately glanced rapidly from him to Mr. Costigan. Henry Winston pushed the card across the table to his friend.

"You'll see him, of course?" observed Costigan, humming an air through his teeth with an appearance of indifference that considerably perplexed the speculations of Mrs. Stubbs.

"Show the gentleman up," said Henry Winston.

" 'Colonel Mercer Beauchamp,' " cried Costigan, reading the name on the card. "He's a military man. All right. I'll slip into the next room. He mustn't see me, you know," and he glided into the bedroom; but before he closed the door he popped out his head, and added, "Just give me a brevet, for the look of the thing—call me Captain Costigan."

At the same moment that the one door was precipitately closed, the other slowly opened, and a middle-sized austere man, with a strong cast of authority and discipline in his manner and bearing, advanced into the room.

"Have I the honour of addressing Mr. Winston?" he inquired.

"That is my name," returned Henry. "I beg you will be seated."

"I come to you upon rather a disagreeable business, Mr. Winston," observed Colonel Beauchamp, "on the part of my friend, Lord Charles Eton."

"I am ready to hear you, sir."

There was a slight pause, just long enough to afford time for a click of the handle of the bedroom door to be heard, Mr. Costigan being engaged at the instant in endeavouring to keep it a hair's breadth ajar that he might the better overhear the conversation.

"We are alone?" inquired the colonel.

"Certainly," returned Winston.

"I presume it is hardly necessary, Mr. Winston, to require a guarantee from you that you will not take advantage of any communication I may have to make from Lord Charles Eton."

"Advantage!"

"That is, that you will consider the communication as one which is understood to be privileged amongst gentlemen."

"Oh! I understand. Whatever communication you have to make, sir, will be perfectly safe."

"That is enough," replied Colonel Beauchamp, settling himself in his chair, and for the first time looking round the room, which, although he betrayed no ill-bred surprise at its somewhat miscellaneous and disorderly furniture, evidently struck him as an odd sort of a residence for a gentleman to whom Lord Charles Eton found it necessary to send a hostile message.

"I am opposed to duelling, Mr. Winston," said the colonel, "on principle; and, although I belong to the old school which encouraged the practice, I was one of those who approved of the standing orders by which it is prohibited in the two services. Therefore, whenever my duty to a friend calls upon me to interfere in matters of this kind, my object is to effect an amicable settlement—if possible."

"The feeling is creditable to you, Colonel Beauchamp."

"You must not give me credit for it as a matter of feeling, but as a matter of reason. A duel, sir, is bad logic. It proves nothing, and only increases the difficulty of getting at a right understanding in such unfortunate affairs as the present."

"May I ask to what purpose you direct these remarks, sir?"

"My purpose, I think, is pretty clear," returned Colonel Beauchamp, half-closing his eyes in a peculiar manner, and directing their focal rays, with some severity of expression, full upon Henry Winston's face. "You appear to have forgotten yourself in a moment of excitement last night, and to have committed an act of violence upon my friend Lord Charles Eton, who is perfectly unconscious of having given you the slightest provocation."

"I will not enter into that question with you, sir," replied Winston.

"Bravo!" whispered Costigan to himself behind the door.

"Assuming the circumstances, exactly as you have stated them," continued Winston, "what does Lord Charles Eton demand?"

"Demand?" echoed the colonel; "no—no—we must not put it in that shape. His lordship might have had recourse to a tribunal of a different kind; and I must say, considering his position, and the absence of provocation, he would have been justified in doing so; but his lordship is too sensitive and high-minded to avail himself of such a remedy."

"Sensitive and high-minded!" exclaimed Henry Winston, in a tone of derision; "pray go on, sir."

"I rely on your own good sense," resumed the colonel, taking no notice of the exclamation, and speaking with a composure of manner that formed a striking contrast to the impatience that was mounting into Henry Winston's cheeks; "I rely on your own good sense for the removal of any difficulties in the way of a friendly adjustment of this affair. You are both very young men—very hot, as all young men are; and things are often done in heat which an honourable man is glad of an opportunity of recalling in his cooler moments."

"Sir," returned Henry Winston, "I have nothing to recal; and I must take the liberty of observing that I do not think your mode of proceeding is calculated to lead us to a friendly adjustment."

"I am sorry you think so," replied the colonel, in a voice of grave irony.

"You assume that I committed an act of violence, without any previous provocation, which is not exactly the best way to promote a good understanding between us. But I have no inclination to discuss the matter with you. You must deal with it in your own way, and it will save time and trouble,

Colonel Beauchamp, if you will come to the point at once."

Costigan, who was getting rather out of humour with the conversation, here nodded his head to himself, as much as to say, "Good!"

"You are surely not indisposed to admit," said the colonel, softening his voice slightly, "that Lord Charles is entitled to *some* concession from you for the indignity you put upon him?"

"I admit nothing—I retract nothing. Now, sir, the course is clear. What is the object of your visit?"

At this interrogatory, Costigan exhibited so lively a satisfaction, that he nearly betrayed his hiding-place.

"Am I to understand that you refuse to make any reparation for the insult you inflicted upon my friend?" demanded the colonel.

"What reparation does he require?"

"The reparation is obvious enough—submission to terms, or——"

"Or?"

"The satisfaction of a gentleman!"

"I accept the alternative without the least hesitation. He shall have the satisfaction he seeks.

Nothing more, I apprehend, remains to be done but to refer you to my friend. If you will be good enough to make an appointment, he will wait upon you in half an hour."

"I like your promptitude and decision. When a man is in a quarrel, the more speedily he carries it through the better; and now that we understand each other, you shall find no impediment or delay on my side. There—I have written the appointment on my card—'Junior United Service Club—at half-past one o'clock precisely.'"

"You will find us, punctual, Colonel Beauchamp."

"What a confounded fog it is. I hope it will clear up for both our sakes within the next four-and-twenty hours."

"I hope so too."

An ambiguous smile, with the ghastly light of the candles making it show somewhat painfully, passed between them, as Henry Winston saw his visitor to the door, and Colonel Beauchamp, after a ceremonious "Good morning!" made the best of his way down the dark and inconvenient stairs.

The moment he was gone, Costigan bounded into the room.

“Capital, my boy! Faith! I couldn’t have done it better myself. That fellow’s up to his business. He wanted to jockey you, but you weren’t to be done. After all, I like to have a fellow to deal with that knows what he’s about, and once he and I come together, we’ll settle the matter in a twinkling. Now, my darlin’ fellow, you’ve nothing to do but just to write a letter home. In such cases I always like to provide for the worst. You needn’t bother yourself, I suppose, to make a will, for I dare say you’re not troubled with much property to leave behind you?”

Henry Winston’s face blanched for a moment, but the colour quickly returned again. He now really felt himself face to face with the retribution for which his spirit had so impatiently panted; and now, for the first time, the thought of those dear friends whose life was folded up in his, and the heavy sorrow that would fall upon them should any fatal chance happen to him, presented itself to his mind. Hitherto but the one object was constantly before him—and in contemplating that, the quiet Wren’s Nest, into which no turbulent passions entered, where all was peace and kindness and simplicity of heart,—the old man, who still looked out, through his daily

paper, with unruffled tranquillity upon the feverish struggles of the world; the careful mother, who had watched over his wayward youth with an affection that was never weary of its round of infinitesimal tenderness; the gentle sister, who loved him so fondly, all had been swept away in the torrent of maddening feelings that raged in his bosom. And now they all rose up before him in their sweetness and purity, in their unchanging devotion and household truth—clinging to every fibre of his heart, and beseeching him to stay his purpose. But it was too late. The die was cast. It was not a time to look back upon his home, which he was, perhaps, about to desolate for ever, except to look back to utter, it might be, his last farewell.

“Will?” returned Henry, rallying himself into as cheerful a voice as he could,—“will? No—no—Costigan, I have nothing to leave, but idle words of miserable comfort. I will write a few letters while you are away.”

“A few letters?” repeated Costigan, putting his hand encouragingly on Henry’s shoulder; “remember, I could not give you any other advice, than to go on as you are, and to live to the age of Methuselah.”

write the better. Don't dwell on it. One little note to your mother, just to say that it was forced on you, and you couldn't help it, will be quite enough. Throw it off at once, and don't let it be on your spirits. Writin' long mournful epistles, that may never be wanted after all, only tries a man's nerves, and you'll want all the nerves you have by-and-by with a blessin'!"

"You are right—a few hasty words will be best."

"Besides, my dear fellow, I was born under a lucky star. The sorrow a harm will come to you. Take my word for that. I never lost a man yet, but three, and they were easily accounted for by reason of accidents that'll happen in the best regulated families. So take heart, Harry Winston; scribble a little bit of a note to your mother, and I'll be back with you in a jiffy, after I take the measure of the colonel. A straight eye, and a steady hand, and if you don't leave your mark upon him, I'm a pinkeen—that's all. Whoo!"

And pitching his hat upon his head with an indescribable leer of hilarity, Mr. Michael Costigan, not caring to notice the emotions that were careening over the head of Harry Winston, darted out of the room.

Our London fogs sometimes clear off about noon; or a little later in the day; but on this occasion the fog was unusually perverse, and got darker and darker as the day advanced, as if there was not enough of gloom in the thoughts of Henry Winston; but that it must be deepened by external influences. The candles emitted a peculiarly sallow flame that struggled out by sheer force into the mist that consumed it. The space under the table and round the table was involved in shadowy darkness, and the whole aspect of the room was such as might have made even a merry man feel uncomfortable. After a few turns up and down, Henry Winston pushed away some of the breakfast things to make room for a little travelling writing-case, and having adjusted his materials, took up his pen to accomplish his task.

He hesitated for a long time before he began. He did not know how to begin. He was afraid of alarming his mother all at once—he wanted to break the news to her gradually. But how was that to be done? “My dearest mother,” — “my beloved mother,” — “my own darling mother,” and other like affectionate phrases passed through his mind, bringing with them throngs of images and memories that came too confusedly to allow him to shape into

words the feelings that agitated him. He felt that he was writing from the threshold of another world. This letter was to be delivered when he was dead. That was its object—with that view it was to be written. Where was he to find adequate expression to atone for the great affliction he was about to cast upon the tenderest and most loving of all human beings—he who had so recently been indebted to her comforting and watchful care for recovery from a long illness, who had received her pious benediction at parting, and who was now about to return all her patient devotion by the cruellest blow that could fall on a mother's heart. He felt that it would kill her. Sheet after sheet was blotted and cast away, and if some tears fell upon them, who shall say that it was a stain upon his manhood?

But such tasks must be accomplished, whatever pangs they cost. The demands of an artificial state of society overrule all obligations of nature and of reason. We set up a false god, which we call Honour, and immolate our duties at its altar. All other claims must be sacrificed to this—the most sacred and endearing—those alike that have been twined round our hearts from childhood, and those that have grown upon us in our maturity; the ties of

a whole life must be rent in a moment to satisfy a passing affront, or appease some trivial or imaginary wound inflicted on our vanity or self-love. Happily for the progress of rational civilisation, public opinion has undergone a revolution on this question, and duelling is regarded in all influential quarters merely as a relic of the barbarous ages, and as affording a proof of nothing on earth but want of sense. Even the few faded and emaciated fire-eaters who yet infest society, are giving up the practice because they can earn no credit by it. No man is now amenable to the imputation of cowardice who declines upon every slight occasion to stand up to be shot at, and to suffer, through his folly, the hopes and affections of many innocent people to be slain at the same moment. As to the courage exemplified in a duel, it is a sheer imposture. The rankest cowards have fought duels, and frequently found a convenient escape in them from their real pusillanimity.

Leaving Henry Winston to fulfil, as best he may, the melancholy duty imposed upon him, we must now follow Mr. Michael Costigan to the Junior United Service Club, in the hall of which establishment he presented himself punctually at the half hour.

Mr. Costigan had unluckily forgotten his card-

case, a circumstance which he was particularly careful to impress upon the porter, and having asked for a slip of paper, he wrote upon it, in a bold and heroic hand, "Captain Costigan," and sent it in to Colonel Beauchamp.

Now Costigan was not a captain in the United Service sense of the word; but he was a captain metaphorically speaking, and felt himself justified in taking up the title whenever it was likely to be useful to him. The fact was, he had been gazetted many years before in a corps of *bon-vivants* that once flourished in the Irish metropolis under the name of the Horse-Marines. He was a captain of Horse-Marines, and had worn their uniform, which consisted of a long naval coat with military buttons and sash, dragoon boots, a cocked hat, and a tin sword at least three yards long. No man was admitted into this corps under the rank of captain. It was a highly disciplined body, and did duty in gallant style once a fortnight over a capital dinner. The fortune of war had thinned its ranks, year after year, from one cause or another, such as death, marriage, bankruptcy, and expatriation; and the Horse-Marines were finally disbanded. But the glory of their achievements, and the memory of

the honours they had conferred, lingered with the few wandering members that yet survived. As Costigan always remarked, whenever the Horse-Marines were alluded to, it was a proud event in a man's life to have been a Horse-Marine.

Colonel Beauchamp was alone in a small ante-room when Costigan was introduced to his presence. The colonel had seen a great many captains in his time, and knew that the class was as full of varieties as the leaves of a wood; but he had never before seen such a captain as Costigan, nor until that gentleman actually stood before him with his attire flying off, and his hirsute face swollen with vivacity of rather a savage cast, could he have made to himself the image of such a captain. The contrast between the two individuals who were thus brought together to conduct an affair of honour to its perilous issue was certainly very striking. The sallow, rigorous visage of the colonel, his erect figure, and that unmistakeable notion which he at once gave you of the martinet, with a strong dash of the aristocrat, in his bearing, offered the most complete opposition to the utterly chaotic aspect of Mr. Michael Costigan, who looked the express image of a man independent of discipline of every kind, mental or

military, and who, in his thoughts and actions, as in his costume, set all order and conformity to established usages, at defiance. And in the hands of these widely dissimilar, and, in different ways, equally incompetent, persons the decision of a question of life and death was now irrevocably vested.

"Captain Costigan, I believe?" said the colonel, examining the person of his visitor with a searching and rapid scrutiny, and placing a significant emphasis on the word *captain*, as if he distrusted his right to the title, or suspected that he must have come by it in some illegitimate way.

"That's my name, sir. You expected a gentleman at half-past one to call upon you on the part of Mr. Henry Winston. Clocks differ, but, upon an average, I b'lieve it's the half hour to the minute."

"I am glad Mr. Winston has selected a gentleman of my own cloth to act for him, captain," observed the colonel, in the hope of extracting from Costigan some intimation of his position in the service. But the bait failed.

"You make me proud, sir," returned Costigan; "and before we've done with this little affair, I

flatter myself you'll be of opinion that my friend might have committed a greater blunder than intrusting his honour to my discretion. It's not the first affair of the sort I've been engaged in, colonel, and I must remark that I never found the least difficulty in coming to a satisfactory arrangement when I had a military man of experience, like yourself, to deal with. It's brats of boys and novices, that don't know the smell of gunpowder from the whiff of a cigar, that brings duelling into disgrace. Don't you agree with me?"

"Entirely."

"Then let us go to business at once. We haven't much time before us to-day, and it's a cruel bad light, and the sooner we settle the preliminaries the better."

"I am glad to hear you say, Captain Costigan," returned the colonel, opposing a remarkably quiet and chilling tone of voice to the impetuous address of the other, "that you never had any difficulty in coming to a satisfactory arrangement with military men. I trust you will not find me an exception to your general experience. As a proof of it, I am quite willing to waive the ulterior right which Mr.

Winston's reference to a friend has given me, and to receive any proposition you may be prepared to make."

"Proposition? Me make a proposition? I'm afraid, colonel, we don't understand each other exactly. Wouldn't it be just as well for us to clear the ground as we go on, so as to prevent any mistakes between you and me, you know," replied Costigan, laying a significant stress on the last few words.

"By all means," said the colonel, who saw precisely the sort of man he had to do with, and that the slightest attempt to take advantage of him, or cajole him, might convert his own position from that of a second to a principal. "By all means. You are aware, in the first instance, I presume, of all the circumstances of the case?"

"Of course I am."

"And I take it for granted, Captain Costigan, that you are fully empowered to carry the matter through?"

"Now, don't you think you're wasting a great deal of time?" cried Costigan. "The business is placed in our hands—that's enough. Go on—it's gettin' darker every minute; and, if you don't make

haste, we'll lose the day. And remember, Colonel Beauchamp, that if any accident happens between the cup and the lip—you understand me—it's no fault of mine."

"I hope I am not throwing any unnecessary impediment in the way, captain," replied the colonel; "I am only anxious to do my duty strictly for the honour of the cloth which we both wear."

"Well, do your duty, and leave the honour of the cloth to take care of itself. It'll be pitch dark before we're done."

"It appears to me," observed the colonel, pressing his chin meditatively between his forefinger and thumb, "that this quarrel between two young men is one of those affairs in which we ought to try—it is not for me to say that such a thing is possible—but that we ought to try to bring about an arrangement. What's your opinion, Captain Costigan?"

"Do you mean a pa-cific arrangement?" inquired Costigan, submitting his chin to a similar process, in imitation of the colonel.

"Well—yes—if you can suggest——"

"Why, if you want to retract your demands on Mr. Winston," returned Costigan, "I don't think

I'd stand in the way; only in that case there'd be a trifling apology due to me for giving me the trouble of coming here for nothing. Is that what you're at?"

"Retract, sir? No; you entirely mistake me. But I see I must speak by the card with you, Captain Costigan; and having indicated to you that I am open to a proposal, I have nothing more to say than that my friend has suffered a humiliating indignity, and looks for the redress to which he is entitled?"

"That's plain English, at last," returned Costigan; "and, putting it in that clear, unmistakeable, and gentlemanly shape, there's no reason in the world why we shouldn't immediately come to a friendly adjustment of our differences. Lord Charles Eton demands redress, and you couldn't hit upon a man in England more ready to give it to him than I am. 'Pon my honour, colonel, sooner than disappoint him, I'd oblige him with a shot myself. Now, then, we understand each other, and there's not another word necessary but to name time and place."

"Before you do so, I am bound to remind you, that if you force me to the ground, I can no longer listen to terms which at present I might be disposed

to accept. The responsibility, therefore, of that step must rest with you."

"I perceive, colonel," replied Costigan, with a humorous shake of his head, "you're an ould bird. No matter—you shall have it your own way; and as you're so mighty particular about responsibility, if it's the least gratification in life to you, I'll take it entirely upon myself. One word for all. We come here to fight, not to talk. We have no terms to offer, and what's more than that—now you've put it plainly to me—we won't be let off. What o'clock is it?"

"A quarter past two."

"The days are gettin' short—what sort of light is there at five?"

"I should certainly say dangerous; but I'd rather not give an opinion. Take your own course. To-day, if you please."

"It's a murderin' light," said Costigan, looking out of the window; "I suppose we must wait till to-morrow morning."

"I should myself prefer to have it over at once," returned the colonel; "but I agree with you that the weather is against us; and the day falling in so

early with such a fog—I think we should be hardly justified.”

“That’s just what I was thinking too. There’s no fair play in such light as this. Suppose we say to-morrow morning, at eight o’clock.”

“Where?”

“Chalk Farm—at the foot o’ the hill, to the left.”

“You will find us prepared.”

“So far, colonel,” said Costigan, taking up his hat, “you and I have agreed to a hair, and I’ve no doubt we’ll part the best friends in the world to-morrow morning.”

“There is no reason why we should have any hostility against each other, Captain Costigan.”

“Not the least,” replied Costigan; “if these foolish young men had got into less experienced hands, it’s hard to say how it might have ended.”

“Quite true.”

“They’re sure of being placed in the best possible position for the vindication of their honour.”

“Yes—they’re sure of that, at all events.”

“And, whatever happens, we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that we have done our duty.”

“I hope so.”

“Then I wish you good evening,” returned Costigan, with a glance into the street, which was now enveloped in darkness; “I wish you good evening, till eight o’clock to-morrow morning, and the compliments of the season to you, Colonel Beauchamp.”

“Good evening, Captain Costigan,” replied the colonel, bowing his visitor to the door.

CHAPTER III.

EXPLANATIONS.

WHEN Mr. Farquhar arrived in Portman-square, Lord Charles Eton was closeted with his friend the colonel, to whom he was relating the occurrence which had taken place at the Opera the evening before, avoiding all reference to antecedent circumstances, and leaving it to appear that the outrage was wholly unprovoked. Taking away that impression with him, Colonel Beauchamp was prepared to demand from Mr. Winston the extreme *amende* provided in such cases—which was nothing more nor less than a written submission to an imaginary horsewhip; we say imaginary, because he was ready to pledge himself that his lordship would not put the said horsewhip actually into force. The proposition of such an apology—had the interview with Henry Winston proceeded to that point—would

have rendered a duel quite as inevitable as Captain Costigan's more direct appeal to that last issue.

In half an hour his lordship gave audience to Mr. Farquhar. Early as it was, he was dressed for the day. He never appeared in a morning-gown to visitors; eschewing all those habits that have a look of luxury and indolence, and cultivating in the minutest trifles the reputation of a man engrossed in public affairs. Your butterfly fop, who steeps his poor carcase in ambrosia, is not more eaten up by affectations, than your hunter of a graver kind of popularity.

Mr. Farquhar opened his business with his habitual calmness and discretion, contenting himself with observing that it was as much due to his lordship as to Mr. Rawlings that the matter should be satisfactorily explained.

Lord Charles Eton received this communication not merely without any appearance of surprise, but with an air of superciliousness, that might have dashed the confidence of a man of less fixed purpose than Mr. Farquhar.

"I really am at a loss to understand what Mr. Rawlings can possibly expect me to do in a matter that took place nearly a quarter of a century ago,"

said his lordship; "he is, of course, at liberty to offer any explanation he chooses, but it is rather unreasonable that he should trouble me on the subject."

"Unreasonable, my lord?" rejoined Mr. Farquhar; "on the contrary, it appears to me the most reasonable of all things, that as you have cast a stigma upon him, he should look to you to assist him in tracing it to its source."

"Mr. Rawlings has become wonderfully sensitive to stigmas all of a sudden," returned his lordship. "If he is so eager to protect his reputation, why doesn't he relieve himself from the weightier charges that are publicly launched against him, instead of intruding upon my time about an obscure transaction of no importance to anybody?"

"I am sorry you take that view of the subject, for, slight as this matter may appear to your lordship, Mr. Rawlings looks at it in a very different light; and it must be judged by his feelings and not by yours. As to the other charges you speak of, I know nothing about them. My business is to ask from your lordship an explanation of the grounds upon which you accused Mr. Rawlings, in the presence of several witnesses, of a breach of trust? I beg you will give me a direct answer."

"'Pon my word, Mr. Farquhar," replied Lord

Charles, "I don't know that I *can* give you a direct answer. I have not the slightest intention of treating you personally with discourtesy—of that, I am sure, you will acquit me,—but really my attention is occupied by more urgent business."

"No business, my lord, can be more urgent," returned Mr. Farquhar, "than that of rendering back justice to those whom we have wronged. As your lordship is in a hurry, I will not detain you a moment longer than is absolutely necessary to obtain the information I seek. I am satisfied your lordship never would have made such an assertion unless you had some foundation for it. Now, what I want to know is, from whom did you derive your information?"

"In answer to that question, allow me to ask you another. Does Mr. Rawlings deny that his employer on his deathbed intrusted him with his confidence?"

"It is the subtle mixture of truth and falsehood, my lord, that renders these calumnies so specious and injurious. There *was* such a confidence, but as it involves the secret of another, he is unwilling to vindicate himself by disclosing it, and showing how honourably he has discharged his trust, unless he is driven to that extremity in self-defence. He is pre-

pared, however, to do so, if your lordship will not afford him the opportunity of convicting his libeller, whoever he may be, by any other means."

"I beg at once, sir, to disclaim for myself any share in the origin of the story. I repeated it simply as it reached me."

"Yes, but if you shelter the calumniator, you assume the responsibility of the calumny."

"It seems to me," returned his lordship, "that you attach more importance to the matter than it is worth. However, if Mr. Rawlings chooses to exaggerate trifles, while he treats serious things with indifference, I shall certainly not offer any obstruction to his proceedings. All I know about the matter is very much at your service, only I must stipulate that I am not to be dragged into it any farther."

"We require no more, my lord, than to know who your informant is, and to be put in possession of the exact information you received."

"I have not the least objection to satisfy you as far as I can," replied his lordship, opening a drawer, and taking out a number of letters; "but as to exact information — the particulars, if I ever had any, have entirely escaped me, and I must refer you, in short, to the person who mentioned

the circumstance to me. That's the only way I can help you."

"That will be quite sufficient."

"I'll find his name for you in a moment," continued his lordship, turning over the letters, and running through them hastily. "Let me see—here it is—Pogey—that's it—Pogey—I know very little about him myself, but I dare say Mr. Rawlings can enlighten you. He is a Yarlton man, and came to me with an introduction which justified me in supposing him to be a respectable person. The best thing you can do is to call upon him—I have no doubt he will repeat the story to you verbatim."

"Where does he live?"

"I have got his address here somewhere—what is it?—6 or 16, Northumberland-court, Strand."

Mr. Farquhar wrote down the address.

"The next time I see your lordship, I hope it will be to satisfy you that Mr. Rawlings has been maligned by this person. That is the only farther trouble I shall give you in the matter. I trust Lady Charles is better this morning? She was not looking quite as well as usual last night."

"Thank you—she is suffering from a nervous headache. I think Miss Rawlings is with her."

"Indeed!" returned Mr. Farquhar; "then I will venture to send in my name."

As Lord Charles intimated, Margaret and Clara were together in the boudoir. He had little suspicion of the cause that led to their meeting at that early hour.

The interview with Henry Winston, and the extraordinary disclosure he made to her, had condemned Margaret to a night of anguish. Her heart was wrung with a conflict of wild emotions. She had hitherto tried to forget Henry Winston; and if she had not succeeded in forgetting him, she had, at least, wrestled faithfully with a feeling which it was madness and disloyalty to acknowledge even to herself. She had believed that if they were to meet again she was safe; that she could encounter his eyes without trepidation; that the influence he once exercised over her could never be revived again; and this belief was a victory in itself. But she had not calculated on the latent force of love. It was all well while doubt and obscurity hung over the incident of their separation—all well, while she mistrusted his truth, and found an escape for her wounded pride in new ties and duties. In one brief

moment the delusion was dispelled. She had seen him again—she had seen the same earnest and passionate devotion in his eyes—she had heard him speak in the same tones of overwhelming despair which, in the last troubled hours of their intercourse, used to impart such touching melancholy to his voice—she had heard from his own lips that some terrible mystery had equally deceived them both—that he loved her still, if that thought might dare to utter itself in words—and she felt that she too,—but she struggled to refuse her conviction to it, and sought refuge from its dark suggestions in the strength of a greater misery.

The conduct of Lord Charles on his return with her from the Opera, might, under these circumstances, have created some alarming apprehensions in her mind, but that she ascribed his sullen fierceness to the scene which had previously taken place in Park-lane. The high breeding which cast such suavity of exterior over his bearing abroad, was dropped when he was alone with Margaret, and left him at his ease to indulge in the undress of a grim silence. But that night he was morose, although he spoke little. It was easy to see that he was moved by some

unusual excitement; although it never occurred to Margaret that Henry Winston could be in any way concerned in it.

The first thing she did in the morning was to despatch a note to Clara, summoning her in haste to come to her; and she thought the interval that elapsed before she came an age.

Margaret's wild and flurried looks betrayed her secret almost before she uttered it.

"I have seen him, Clara!"

"Henry Winston?"

"At the Opera last night. He came into my box. I was alone. Oh! Clara, Clara, what has happened? What is this terrible thing he tells me? It would be all well—as nothing to me—if my heart did not tell me that by some dreadful mischance I have wronged him, and that he is suffering for it. There is my remorse—it is for him, not for myself. All feeling for myself is dead—dead—dead!"

Margaret had covered her face with her hands while she was speaking the last few broken words, and did not at first perceive the change that had suddenly passed over the features of Clara. A ghastly paleness overspread her face. She saw in an instant that the secret—which out of mercy to her sister she

hoped might never transpire—had been discovered, and divulged to her in the worst form of suspicion and reproach. Bitter remorse was in her soul, and when she tried to speak her voice failed.

“What is this, Clara?” continued Margaret; “for God’s sake, speak to me. I remember there was something weighing heavily on your mind, and you charged me not to ask you any questions. And I did not—I was silent, though my heart was breaking. But all that has passed away, and now there is no longer any reason why you should make a mystery with me about Henry Winston.”

“Margaret,” replied Clara, clasping her hands passionately, and looking into her face with an expression of great mental agony, “I never, of my own will, had a concealment from you in my life. Your happiness was mine from childhood. You know it—you believe it in your heart.”

“I do—I do.”

“You cannot believe that I would have willingly hidden anything from you? No—no—no! Acquit me of that, and relieve me of a misery which is tenfold greater than your own.”

“What am I to say, or think, Clara? There *was* a concealment—why was it? Henry Winston gave

you a letter. You never told me of it. You knew the contents of that letter, and never revealed them to me. You must have had some reason, or you never would have doomed me to the wretchedness you knew I was suffering—the worse than wretchedness, the sin of a marriage without love, or hope, which has blighted his life and mine.”

“Spare me, for mercy’s sake, these cruel words. It is true—it is true, Margaret,” she added, in a low voice; “I did conceal that letter from you. He has told you of it, and I am absolved so far. God help me! How gladly I should have told you everything, and warned you—if I had dared. But I was bound, Margaret,—I shudder when I think of it—bound by an oath.”

“An oath!”

“Do you recollect the morning you drove out with my father and Lord Charles?”

“Oh, yes, dear Clara; go on.”

“Do you remember how I tried to persuade you not to go?”

“And you knew then that he was waiting for me?”

“I did.”

“It is dark and incredible. Did you know that

we were to drive past the spot where he was expecting me?"

"I suspected it; and that was the reason why I wanted you not to go."

"There is still a mystery in this, Clara, and I have a right to have it cleared up. Think well, before you answer me; think whether there is any obligation upon you strong enough to justify you in heaping more misery on me than I can bear. Do not make me desperate, Clara. We have wronged him to whom my early affections were pledged, and for whose sake I would then have cheerfully encountered poverty and toil, a thousand times over, rather than have deceived or wounded him for one moment. His heart is broken. It is a heavy thought to me, guiltless as I am of having brought it on him. I say this to you because you are my sister, and because I have always confided my inmost feelings to you. I would not confess it to any other human being—not to *him*, for the wealth of the world! Think before you answer me. I know you will take this load from me, that is crushing and killing me. You say you suspected that they would drive me to the place where he was waiting for me, as if

they had some horrid purpose in it. What made you suspect that?"

"Because," replied Clara, slowly, her lips turning white, and trembling as she spoke—"because my father knew he was waiting there."

"Merciful heavens!" exclaimed Margaret, "I see the whole treachery at once. I see it all now. How blind and infatuated I must have been! I ought to have understood it—and one word would have made it clear! But it is clear now. My father intercepted the letter?"

"He did."

"And made you swear, Clara?—imposed an oath upon you?"

Clara waived her head to and fro, but made no answer.

"That my father should have done this! May God forgive him!" cried Margaret, uttering a bitter groan. "I hardly know," she continued, after a pause, "whether it is better that this knowledge should have thus come to me, or been hidden from me for ever. It is well, at all events, that *he* should know I was ignorant of everything, and unconscious of the great crime I was committing. It will be some solace to him—a poor consolation for a life of

unavailing sorrow. But we must never meet in this world again."

"Had I supposed," said Clara, still speaking in a voice almost inarticulate, "that there was any likelihood of your ever meeting Henry Winston—for I imagined he had left the country, or hoped it, for both your sakes—I believe I should have broken this to you in some way after your marriage, Margaret; but I thought all along I acted rightly in concealing it, although it preyed upon my spirits; and I should never have known happiness to the end of my life till I had confessed it. I thought I should have done wrong to have embittered your existence with a regret, so poignant and so useless, and that it was better to leave it as it was."

"I am sure you did all for the best:—my poor Clara! with this malediction over you, and I to know nothing of it!"

"And besides, dear Margaret," continued Clara, going on quietly with her confession, "I had great misgivings about him. I expected, at first, from day to day, that he would write to me, or find some means of communicating with you. But day after day I was disappointed in that hope; and then, as time passed away, I began to waver about him, and

wonder what had happened; and then doubts and fears of his truth came upon me, and I tried at last to persuade myself that he was not worthy of you; and in that sophistry I lived. It was all that was left to me to stifle my remorse."

During these explanations Margaret was pacing up and down the room. The misery she was undergoing was legible in her ashy face, and the convulsive action with which at intervals she wrung her hands. A silence ensued, which neither of them seemed disposed to break. What could either of them say to lighten or alleviate the grief that was equally afflicting to both.

At length Margaret, stopping opposite to Clara, resumed the conversation.

"You remember that letter of Rose Winston's."

"Yes."

"We can understand it now. When he saw me that morning in the carriage with Lord Charles, he believed that I had yielded to my father's commands—that I was false—so soon, too! It was natural enough—it looked like it—though he ought to have known me better. Yet what could he think? It was a devilish act to take me there. Rose heard all this from him—how she must have hated me!"

"We should undeceive her. You ought to write, and explain it to her."

"Explain it to her? What can it avail either of us to explain it now? I am very wretched, Clara. May God strengthen me through this trial, for I feel it almost too hard to bear!"

"You must not talk in that way, Margaret. There are many consolations, I hope, yet in store for you. We must trust to time to heal these wounds. Remember that he is young; and as he grows older, and mixes more with the world, he will, probably, marry; and then——"

"And then, Clara? *I* am married—he, too, may marry as I have done. Will that help us to forget? Will that enable us to look back upon the past with ease of heart, to think with indifference of the pledge that has been between us, of the attachment which bound us to each other from childhood, and which has been so cruelly blighted by no act of our own, but by a fiendish conspiracy? Now that the truth is clear to us both, that we know how we have been deceived, that we have made the fatal discovery that the love still survives which was once pure and righteous, and is now the blackest guilt—how can either of us think of marriage,

without a consciousness that in our souls we are criminals to its vows? My life henceforth is a life of hypocrisy!"

"Perhaps, Margaret, your sensibility has exaggerated the state of his feelings."

"Ah! how gladly should I take that comfort to myself, if I dare. It would be the happiest news you could bring me, Clara, that he had thrown off all memory of me—that he loved another. I think, could I be assured of that, I should be happy—happy! But that last wretched resource is denied to me. He looks wretchedly ill—the change that has taken place in him is frightful—he did not complain—all he sought was an explanation, to which I little thought he was so well entitled; but he said his life was miserable, and he looked it. He need not have said he was miserable—my own heart felt it before he spoke!"

"What did you say to him?"

"What could I say? I told him that we were separated for ever; that I would not listen to him; that he must leave me. Words, of course. He knew how false they were!"

"Well? He respected your position, and left you?"

"He did. He left me. That is the point, Clara. You do not feel it—you cannot. Henry Winston loves me. If he did not love me, he would have acted differently. He fled from me in terror, and prayed of me, if I should ever think of him after that night, to think kindly of him. Think kindly of him! Clara, I have but one wish to fulfil towards him, and I ask you, by your love for me, to execute it. Will you promise me?"

"What is it, Margaret?"

"I must never see Henry Winston again. I am the wife of Lord Charles Eton. If I can be nothing more to him, I will at least act in that relation to him with integrity. I swear this! I pledge myself before God that, racked as I am with dreadful thoughts, by a grief that no words can express, I will discharge my duties as a wife, so that not a stain shall fall upon me. But, for Henry Winston, let there be seas and continents between *him* and me. We must not live in the same land. We must know nothing of each other from this time forth. For my sake he must do this; and if he does not, I will. But I trust all to his generosity, to his love—as I used to do. I would rather owe that obligation to him—it would be something to soften my

fate hereafter, to know that he, after the wrong I have done, had made this sacrifice for my repose. You understand me, Clara?"

"I think I do."

"It is only just that he should learn how all this happened, and that he should have it from you."

"From me, Margaret?"

"He supposes that you suppressed the letter. You knew the contents of it—you undertook to convey it to me. All this came upon me so suddenly that, ignorant as I was of what had taken place, I could say nothing but that I had never received the letter, or heard of it. My wish is, that you should explain everything to him. You may see him, though I must not: tell him exactly how it occurred; but be careful how you compromise my feelings. He must not think—it would be little happiness to him to think that I regard him otherwise than as a stranger. That is all that he can ever be to me; and if he will consult my last injunction, tell him he must go away far from where I am—that we must never meet; that if he will do this, he shall have my respect—my prayers for his welfare and happiness!"

"Margaret, I dare not do it."

" You refuse me, Clara?"

" My father bound me never to be the medium of any communication between you and Henry Winston. Show me how I can escape that obligation, and there is nothing you may not command me to do."

" Is such a pledge binding now, Clara? My father has no longer any control over my actions. "

" But he has over mine. It is less of that I am thinking than of you. Consider your own situation. Suppose this reached my father. How can we tell what it might lead to, in the hostility that exists between him and Lord Charles?"

Margaret was stunned and hurt by the view Clara took of the subject. She had calculated confidently on her compliance; and felt as if it were due to herself as some reparation for the misery of which Clara had been made the instrument. She thought, too, that her marriage ought to be a sufficient argument with Clara to absolve her from her oath. Was that pledge, so unnatural in itself, to impend over them for ever, and, at a moment like this, to alienate her sister from her? Making no reply, she turned away, and took a seat in silence in the window.

Clara saw that she was pained, and was about to speak, when Mr. Farquhar's name was announced. This unexpected interruption was, perhaps, the best thing that could have occurred. It broke off the conversation at a point where it had become deeply distressing to them both, and forced them to make an exertion to control their feelings.

At the name of Mr. Farquhar, Clara faintly brightened up. She paused for an instant as if some sudden thought had struck her; and then going up hastily to her sister, she kissed her forehead, and seizing both her hands, while her eyes were filled with tears, she said,

"Margaret—my own sweet, suffering sister—something has occurred to me. I will not tell you now what it is. I think I see, I am sure I do, how we can manage this, without compromising you, or me, or anybody. It is right that Henry Winston should be relieved by a full explanation, and, above all, that your wishes should be conveyed to him. I feel that as strongly as you do—perhaps am even more anxious about it, because I am the cause of all the trouble and sorrow that have fallen on you both. Cheer up, dear Margaret. I see how we can do it—and I promise you it shall be done. There—

there—my own, own Margaret! Your poor Clara can never know happiness again unless she sees you smile, and love her as you used to do!"

The transition from the harrowing disclosures which had taken place between the sisters, to the happy news Mr. Farquhar had to communicate, acted like an electric shock upon Clara's nerves. Our whole existence is duplex—light and shadow, for ever flitting and falling about us, dooming mind and brain to fluctuations of joy and sorrow that wear them out at last!

The interview was short, and, so far as Mr. Farquhar was concerned, much restrained in its gaiety by his consideration for Lady Charles. It was when he was gone, taking Clara with him, that he gave full vent to his joy; for Mr. Farquhar, although he was so staid and reserved before third parties, was as light-hearted with his mistress as other men.

And when they were gone, poor Margaret, left again to her solitude, after witnessing the dawn of that married happiness which was extinguished upon earth for her, felt more deeply than before the bitterness of the cup of life, and wept in her loneliness, and prayed for resignation!

CHAPTER IV.

CHALK FARM.

HAVING made the necessary arrangements for the next day's business, Mr. Costigan took up his quarters in Henry Winston's lodgings for the night, to ensure punctuality, and avoid the suspicion that would be excited by knocking up the house at an unseasonable hour in the morning. Making Winston go to bed early, and telling him he should call him at half-past five, he proceeded to examine the condition of his hair-triggers, and inspect the contents of a stray decanter that stood invitingly on the side-table amongst a scattered array of glasses. In an hour or so all was quiet; save that Henry Winston, who still lay awake, was intermittingly reminded of the proximity of his friend by certain hacking sounds that seemed as if Costigan were trying very hard to blow cracked penny trumpets in

his sleep. At half-past five, Costigan was in his room. It was pitch dark, and the candle he had lighted only made the gloom more palpable. The fog was still so heavy over the metropolis that the nearest lamp in the street could hardly be discerned, and looked as if it were miles off. They spoke together in whispers, and moved about noiselessly, scrambling for breakfast cups, and blundering over a coffee apparatus which had been left prepared for them over-night. Mr. Sloake and his son lay in the room above them, and Costigan was particularly anxious not to disturb them, for Sloake was just the sort of man, if he heard a stir in the house, to hurry down stairs in his dressing-gown to see what it was about.

At length the coffee was ready. There was no time for sitting down, and so they snatched what they could standing and half-dressed, Costigan facetiously promising his friend that they would make a roaring breakfast when they returned.

"Now," said Costigan, when Winston's toilet was finished, "let me look at you. What's this?"

"Eh?" returned the other, not exactly comprehending him.

"Of course, I know it's a waistcoat. But did

you ever see a man fight a duel in a white waist-coat? Haven't you got such a thing as a black one?"

"To be sure."

"Then put it on. Do as I tell you, now, and don't talk. There, that's better. Now, just take off that tie, and get a long black handkerchief, and pin it down over your shirt."

Henry Winston was under orders, and implicitly obeyed them.

"Och! I've my own trouble with you. Take out that diamond pin—Hush! no noise—" he continued in a guarded undertone, "don't you see it'd catch the light, man alive! That's right. Stop, now, just turn in your collar. There musn't be a speck of white about you. Hould here a minute—open your coat, and let me put this belt round you;" and he proceeded to buckle a hunting belt round Winston's waist, fastening it so tightly that Winston winced under the operation. "Is that too tight for you?—try if you can breathe." It was as much as he could do.

Costigan now turned him round, and surveyed him carefully from head to foot. His eye fell upon Winston's boots.

"French polish!" he exclaimed, in a low growl; "have you taken leave of your senses, that you

must stick your feet into a pair of looking-glasses? Do you wish to be hit? for, if you want to attract a bullet, you couldn't do it more complete. If you've got a pair of cloth-boots in the world, put them on; or any ould pair that's dim and dirty, without a glimmer of polish on them, mind!"

These scientific instructions being strictly complied with, nothing more remained to be done, but to give Henry Winston a few hints as to how he was to manage himself on the ground.

"Put your watch in your right-hand pocket. Now, don't contradict me—it's all fair. A man has a right to wear his watch, I suppose, in any pocket he chooses, and I've known a watch before now turn off a bullet—a button, or anything will do it. Observe what I'm telling you. Before I place you on the ground, turn up the collar of your coat this way, and button it all round—slouch your hat so as to cover your ears—draw in your breath before you discharge your pistol, and make yourself as thin as you can. By this means, you'll be dark and slim from head to foot, and not a speck on you to catch his eye. That's a grand secret, my boy! Are you used to pistols?"

"Not much."

“ Then all you’ve got to do is just to draw a line with your eye straight from your foot to his—and if you see any object on the ground—such as a tuft of grass, or a dark spot—let that be a mark to guide you—or a tree or a chimney, or anything at his back. Fire low—keep your elbow close to your side, and don’t raise your hand higher than that.”

As Costigan afterwards explained to Henry Winston, the object to be kept in view, when men, as in this case, really intended to fire at each other, was to hit the legs. If the shot took a higher range it was dangerous; and the inclination of the twentieth part of an inch would make all the difference between a scar for life and a death-wound. Henry Winston was perfectly cool and collected. He had dismissed from his mind all thoughts that were likely to interfere with the business on which he was engaged, and was more calm that morning than he had been at any time since the miserable day when he had last left London.

They stole out of the house before any of the inmates were up, and made their way to a carriage that was waiting for them at the corner of the Regent’s-circus, Henry Winston, enveloped in a

large cloak, and Costigan carrying the case of pistols. Our experienced duellist had not provided a surgeon for the occasion, taking it for granted that his lordship would have professional assistance, and intending, if it was necessary, to avail himself of it. Besides, Mr. Costigan had a smattering of surgery himself, and, in case of extremity, could act as a *pis-aller*.

They started for Chalk Farm in a dense fog. A few gas-lamps, which were not yet extinguished by their attendant imps, still flared out here and there, on the sides of the road as they cleared the end of Mornington-crescent, and began to feel the cold damp air of the country displacing the thick atmosphere of town. A solitary pedestrian, or a suburban fishmonger's light cart trundling home from Billingsgate, or a straggling group of workmen shuffling off to their day's labours, were the only incidents that relieved the dreary drive.

Turning off the high-road at that point where a large signboard announces the vicinity of a tavern that bears the name of Chalk Farm, the carriage slowly and cautiously wound up a curving acclivity, and stopped short, under Costigan's directions, at a railway bridge which led, and still leads, to a piece

of broken ground running up to the broad fields that stretch out their green expanse, at the foot of Primrose-hill.

Some ten or a dozen years, or more, had passed away since a duel had been fought in this locality, and in the intervening time, the place had undergone changes in the last degree unfavourable to the seclusion necessary for that once popular pastime. In former days, the country round Chalk Farm was wild and open; there was scarcely a house within sight; and, like the swamp at Battersea-fields, it was so tempting in its remoteness, that a rifle club established their targets on the ground, in perfect confidence that, as far as their stray bullets could carry, there was not the slightest danger of grazing even a chance passenger.

The scene was now materially altered. A great, sprawling railway station, with its numerous intersecting lines, electric wires, waggons and locomotive sheds and shops, occupied the space below which was formerly assigned to the longest range of the rifle-shooting; and higher up, where the matches at shorter distances used to take place, the area was covered over and shut in with a low wall and a scrubby hedge, an American bowling-alley, and

sundry tattered merry-go-rounds, affording evidence that the place which was once the haunt of skilful marksmen, and gentlemen who came hither in the grey of the morning to settle their disputes, was now the resort of the most beggarly class of holiday-makers.

All traces of the ancient solitude had disappeared. There stood the old Chalk Farm tavern, miserably poor and deserted, with its flight of crazy stairs, doing its best to look Swiss and summery, and, on the opposite side, its ragged tea-gardens, presenting ghastly imitations of the painted sentries, and fire-work towers of Vauxhall. Advancing through the line of dilapidated pallisades by which the champaign that yawns round the base of the hill is enclosed, the busy and despoiling hand of change was no less visible. Rows of new houses at a distance, lofty chimneys starting up amongst the trees that fringed the horizon, and a sort of gymnasium, boarded round, and filled with swings, and climbing poles, and rotatory machines for making people's heads dizzy, caught the sight with a disturbing influence. The naked stillness of these wide meadows was gone for ever. Yet there was room enough on that extensive sward to find an unfrequented spot for Costigan's purpose;

and as his practised eye ran over the scene, he noted its salient points with rapidity.

Up the gentle slope to the summit of the hill, crossed at its foot by a beaten path, ran several small tracks, forming light traces of infinite utility to a duellist who thoroughly understood the available advantages of his ground, and the art of placing his man. But the land-mark that chiefly attracted his attention was a tree, which, like Picton's tree on the plain of Waterloo (long since cut down), stood quite alone, and was the only visible object throughout the whole space that rose out of the dead level of the field. The worst of it was this tree stood so close to the road (it stands there still), that the choice of such a position might be demurred to by the opposite party; but so few people were about, and, moreover, it was so dark, that Costigan hoped to overrule that objection.

They had not been many minutes on the ground when they discerned three figures at a distance beyond the palings. It was impossible to identify them; but they concluded at once that two of the group must be Lord Charles and his second, and were confirmed in this supposition by seeing one of the party retire before they entered the field. Advanc-

ing towards each other, a ceremonious recognition took place on both sides, and Colonel Beauchamp and Mr. Costigan withdrawing together, left their principals alone. They were within speaking distance, but they instinctively turned away, and walked in opposite directions, while their seconds were arranging the requisite preliminaries.

"Here's a good spot, colonel," said Costigan.

"Too close to the road," returned the colonel.

"Well, a little further on," said Costigan.

"Don't you think we had better get behind the hill on the other side?" observed Beauchamp.

"The ground's uneven there. Depend on it, this is the best spot."

"Let me see—which way do you propose to place them?"

"I was thinking of that," replied Costigan, beginning to step the field in a direct line towards the tree.

Colonel Beauchamp looked knowingly at him. "I object to the tree, Captain Costigan. Let us at least avoid unnecessary risk. Higher up we shall be less exposed. Which way is the wind?"

"In our faces as we stand."

"Then we had better take our ground across."

"All the same to me—equal main and chance," returned Costigan.

Moving towards the foot of the hill, farther away from the houses, a tolerably screened level was selected, Mr. Costigan beguiling the time by cracking a grim joke on the sun, which there was no necessity to toss up for on this occasion, as it was obviously impossible to decide in what part of the firmament he was buried. The ground was paced by Colonel Beauchamp—backed at one extremity by a hill, and at the other by a distant wood. The signal agreed upon was, "One, two, three!" and Costigan won the advantage of giving it. The pistols were now drawn and loaded; and nothing more was to be done but to place the principals on the ground.

As Costigan walked with Henry Winston to the spot assigned to him, he whispered—"I'm to give the signal 'One—two, three!' I'll pause between 'One—two;' 'three' will follow instantly—'two, three!' There's a little path on the hill behind him—keep your eye on that, and you'll cover him."

The principals were now placed, and the seconds withdrew midway on opposite sides.

"Now, gentlemen," cried Costigan.

Colonel Beauchamp made a slight movement with his hands, as if he were putting on his gloves.

"I'll wait till you're ready, Colonel Beauchamp," said Costigan quietly.

"I'm quite ready, sir," returned Beauchamp.

"I know what I'm doing, sir," replied Costigan, "and I'll have no motions to distract attention while I'm giving the signal. If you've any objection to my proceedings, we can easily settle that afterwards."

Colonel Beauchamp folded his arms, and stood perfectly still.

"Now, gentlemen," resumed Costigan after a pause, "One—two, three!"

Both pistols were discharged nearly at the same instant, and both parties kept their ground. When Costigan went up to Henry Winston, he found that the turf had been struck at his feet, but no mischief was done.

"Are you satisfied, gentlemen?" demanded Costigan.

The question was unnecessary. Lord Charles Eton still stood erect, but it was evident, from the way in which Colonel Beauchamp held him by the shoulder, that Winston's ball had taken effect.

"Not hurt?" inquired Costigan.

"Not much, I hope," replied Colonel Beauchamp, conveying by a side glance to Costigan that he feared the worst: "may I trespass on your good offices, Captain Costigan, to send the surgeon to us—he is waiting in a carriage."

"With the greatest pleasure," replied Costigan, turning to Henry Winston, and hurrying him off the field. The surgeon was shut up in a postchaise on the road, and, as Costigan passed, he intimated to him that his services were required, and regaining his own carriage, drove back to town as fast as an indifferent pair of horses could carry them.

Henry Winston's ball had entered below the shoulder, and by the time the surgeon arrived, Lord Charles was becoming faint from loss of blood, and was suffering severe agonies. A rapid examination on the ground discovered to them that the ball was lodged somewhere amongst the vessels, and doubts were entertained whether they could convey the wounded man across the field without obtaining the aid of a litter. But Lord Charles strenuously opposed any measure that would attract attention to his situation—he wished to get home quietly—and, supported between his friends, with struggling

steps, sinking and stopping at intervals, he at last reached the postchaise, which proceeded with its bleeding burden, at a foot-pace, to Portman-square.

CHAPTER V.

THE DEATHBED SECRET.

MR. FARQUHAR lost no time in following up the information he had received from Lord Charles, and had no sooner left Clara at home in Park-lane, than he proceeded to Northumberland-court in search of Mr. Poge, having previously taken care to apprise Mr. Rawlings of his movements.

Of Mr. Poge's antecedents he knew nothing; and regarding him simply as the utterer of a calumny, he considered it prudent to act with caution, under a reasonable apprehension that a man who could be guilty of uttering an injurious scandal would not be very scrupulous in trying to escape the consequences. Northumberland-court is a *cul de sac*, dark, narrow, and as still as a graveyard, inserted in the heart of the din of London. From the announcements on the windows, you perceive at once that the place is

a *refugium* for single men of a loose and motley cast, whose requirements in the way of lodgings are limited to a graduated scale of bedrooms, and whose freedom of ingress is secured at all hours of the night by latch-keys and lucifer-boxes. It is just the place in which an odd fish like Pogeey, hanging upon the skirts of promises and delusive hopes, might be expected to take up his quarters.

There was a puzzle about the number; but after inquiring at two or three houses, Mr. Farquhar discovered the right house at last. The door was opened by a sooty, sluttish girl, with a shockingly vixenish expression of countenance.

"Does a gentleman of the name of Pogeey live here?" inquired Mr. Farquhar.

"Pogeey? Three pair back," she replied, at the same moment darting into the parlour and slamming the door after her.

This unceremonious reception left Mr. Farquhar no alternative but to pursue the inquiry for himself, and he accordingly ascended the stairs in search of the "three pair back," to which he was directed. "Fine encouragement for speculators in portable articles," thought he, as he groped his way up the dingy staircase. "If I were only an expert thief now!"

When he reached Pogeys door, which was cut in a thin partition, and papered over like the rest, he heard a hum of voices within, which assured him that the man he sought was at home.

"Come in!" cried a husky voice, in reply to his knock.

The room was an attic, with a single window stretching out amongst the tiles, a bed in one corner, a scrap of a table, some clothes scattered about in disorder, and hardly space enough for the three persons who were now enclosed in it—consisting of Mr. Pogeys, who was lying on the bed, with his hand under his head, a lanky visitor, who was standing in the window recess, and Mr. Farquhar.

"Mr. Pogeys?" inquired Mr. Farquhar.

"That is my name," returned Pogeys, raising his head languidly. "Bless me!" he added, staring with surprise at the apparition of a stranger, and surveying Mr. Farquhar from head to foot, "I beg your pardon. I thought it was the laundress!"

The individual who stood in the window, and whose outline, in spite of the shabbiness of his dress, had a certain air of better days and gentility about it, now advanced towards Mr. Farquhar.

"I think," he said, "I have the pleasure of

knowing this gentleman. Confoundedly dark here—but, if I don't mistake, I have met you at Mr. Rawlings'?"

"You have the advantage of me," returned the other; "I know Mr. Rawlings—but——"

"Mr. Farquhar, I think?"

"Quite right, sir: may I ask your name?"

"Dingle—Captain Scott Dingle—you remember me?"

"Oh! perfectly well. I am very glad to meet you."

"This gentleman is a friend of Mr. Rawlings, Pogeey."

"Very curious," remarked Pogeey; "just talking of him this moment. Great changes, sir, since I knew Mr. Rawlings first. The way of the world—one up, another down. I've had my rubs—wasn't all my life cribbed up in a den like this—eh, Dingle?"

Mr. Pogeey shuffled off the bed, and stood upright in the middle of the room. Great changes indeed! The pury man had become flabby—the plump face had wasted downwards—his cheeks had fallen in heavy masses of skin over his jowls—and his rusty clothes, hanging in patches upon him, betrayed the attenuated corpulence that had once filled them out

so lustily. The merry twinkle of the eye was gone—a morbid and bilious tint lay upon his features—and a brown wig, bristling over with sprightly curls, gave a painfully ludicrous expression to his whole appearance. The original character of the man was exclusively preserved in his wig. His optimism still danced out in those comical little twists of hair; all the rest was a dead blank of disappointment and hopelessness.

“Glad to see any friend of Mr. Rawlings. Thought he hadn’t forgotten me altogether!”

“It is on his business, Mr. Poge, I came here. You have known Mr. Rawlings a long time I believe?”

“You may say that,” returned Poge. “Known him? I have known him since he was a strip of a lad. Bless my soul! when I look back and think. The world is really a sort of magic lantern. I was well off when I knew Richard Rawlings first, eh? Do you remember, Dingle? I was a comfortable man then. Lord, Dingle, what we have seen and gone through in our time,—the ups and downs of this volcanic earth! It was the railways ruined me, sir: and just fancy now how strangely things turn up—they made the fortune of Richard Rawlings.

Fortune and misfortune, sir—action and reaction all through the whole animal economy of man.”

“ Very true, sir—very true,” replied Farquhar.

“ ’Pon my life! though,” observed Dingle, “ it is very wonderful what fluctuations take place in life. As for me, I am an old campaigner—hang it! I don’t mind knocking about, only I’m not quite so young as I was, and it comes a little hard upon me now;—but here’s Pogey—with a profession at his back—carried everything before him in Yarlton—such a man as that, sir, ought to be able to live. Now, I’m fit for nothing, was bred to nothing—if I can’t live like a gentleman, must starve like a gentleman. But, Pogey—devil take it, Rawlings ought to do something for him.”

“ I think I can answer for Mr. Rawlings,” replied Farquhar, “ that he is well disposed to serve his friends. They are not so plenty, Mr. Pogey, that a man can afford to turn his back upon them.”

“ Friends!” exclaimed Pogey, “ I was going to say, that you might as well look for a pin in a bundle of hay. But I have great faith, sir, in human nature; always had. There are all sorts of people to be found, if we only knew where to find them. That’s my philosophy: never knew it

fail yet. Miss to-day—hit to-morrow. Sound sense that, I believe. Three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, and plenty of room. Some people never think of that—now I am always thinking of it, and looking forward. Very odd I should be talking of Mr. Rawlings, and you should pop in just at the moment. Thought he wouldn't forget me! Ha! ha! ha! My philosophy isn't so bad after all, Mr. Farquhar!"

Pogey was in high glee. For the thousandth time in his career of perpetual expectation he confidently believed that his cards were all trumps. He was perfectly oblivious of the little bit of sly treachery he had practised against Richard Rawlings; or, perhaps, if it did flash upon his memory, he trusted to the improbability of its ever having transpired against him.

"A cheerful philosophy, at all events," rejoined Mr. Farquhar; "and certainly much wiser than to give way to despondency. There's always help for people who are resolutely determined to help themselves. My object in calling upon you, Mr. Pogey, was to say that Mr. Rawlings is anxious to see you, and, as you understand the value of time so well, perhaps you would accompany me to him at once."

"Only too delighted," replied Pogeey, "and under all manner of obligations to you for giving me the chance. We should never let the grass grow under our feet, you know—the cup and the lip—fine old saying that, and as true as the Gospel. I haven't lived all these years of my life in an indiscriminate row with mankind, as I may say, for nothing—depend upon that. Ready for you in three minutes."

While Pogeey was bustling about the room, Dingle put in a claim to join them. He hadn't seen Rawlings for weeks past, and was intending every day to give him a look in. Mr. Farquhar was a little reluctant at first to admit a third party to their counsels; but, as Dingle seemed to know so much of Pogeey's history, he thought Mr. Rawlings might find him useful, and so he consented to give him a seat in the cab that was waiting in Charing-cross to convey them to Park-lane.

When they turned out into the daylight, dim as it was, the seediness of their wardrobes was revealed in detail. They realised the perfect ideal of those sinister, threadbare figures we see skulking about the streets, whom we pass with a vigilant hand upon our pockets, and whom we hope to see dogged at a

safe distance by a lynx-eyed policeman. We sometimes do injustice to poverty in this matter; for, if it were as innocent as a babe, it cannot help looking suspicious.

Mr. Rawlings had waited at home expecting Mr. Farquhar.

The meeting was a remarkable illustration of the "ups and downs" Poge spoke of. Since he and Mr. Rawlings had seen each other last, they had been severally projected to the opposite extremities of prosperity and distress: the relation which they held to each other in the first days of their acquaintance, when Poge was on the pinnacle of his Yarlton glory, and Richard Rawlings was a scrub and drudge in Noah's Ark, had been inverted to an extent of exaggeration very difficult of belief; yet, notwithstanding the grand house and retinue of servants on the one side, and the sunken penury on the other, the predominant characteristics of both remained pretty much the same. Richard Rawlings was as impassive and unimpressionable as ever, and Poge was still blatant in his rags. The latter worthy individual little suspected, when he flustered into the fine drawing-room, trying not to look sheepish and abashed, and endeavouring to work

himself up into the burly and topping mood of the old times, how short a distance in the way of worldly aggrandizement really separated them at that moment!

"Well," exclaimed Pogey, after the first salutations were over, dry and curt enough on Mr. Rawlings' part, "I *did* hear you had a fine place, and all the rest of it; but really this is beyond everything. A palace—actually a palace! What a sight of money you must have laid out! Well, it *is* a pleasure, after all, to see one's friends flourishing. It's quite out of all calculation."

"Superb, isn't it, Pogey?" cried Dingle, sauntering negligently about the room, with the air of one who was familiar with grandeur of that sort.

"Superb? Magnificent—really. Ah! Mr. Rawlings, you *are* the fortunate man; but I must say you deserve it,—never let go the main chance—industry, perseverance, steady as old Time. Never knew it fail—except in my own case. I'm an exception to the general rule. Don't know how it is, but it slipped somehow through my fingers. Thought I was pretty safe, too; kept my eye on business, morning, noon, and night; turned everything to account, never lost an opportunity, worked

like a horse—all no use. Business ran away from me like water through a sieve. And now, where am I? Actually nowhere. But it might have been worse; and I often think that's a great comfort, Mr. Rawlings. Too prudent to marry—now that I call a hit. True political economy adapted to the use of families. Where should I be now if I had married? Just think—a houseful of children, and no house to put them in. Capital joke that would be—eh?”

“Much better as it is, Mr. Poge,” said Rawlings, with a dryness in his voice that brought down Poge’s artificial spirits as effectually as a sudden frost acts on the sensitive mercury of the thermometer. “Better as it is. You have one advantage, at all events, over me, that you are pretty sure to escape envy and detraction.”

“Envy? ah! yes—true. Nobody envies me, I dare say. But I don’t know about detraction. Had my share of that. You can’t conceive what I have suffered from the jealousy of the faculty.”

“You are not singular,” returned Rawlings; “I, who have been no man’s rival, am made the mark of the basest detraction, from quarters, too, where I should have least expected it.”

“You, Mr. Rawlings? You? oh! pooh!—you?”

—you can afford it. It don't affect you, you know—not a bit of it. If I were in your shoes, I'd let them say what they liked. Bring my philosophy to bear on it. But, lord! philosophy's no good to me now—no use for it, except to lend it to my friends—eh? Ha!" ending with a little broken spasm of a laugh, as if he were trying to work up the steam against the storm he saw gathering in Richard Rawlings' face.

"I can afford it less than you can, Mr. Pogey; but that is nothing to the purpose. You have known me a great number of years, and, although I am not in want of a certificate of character, I wish to ask you whether you are aware of any circumstance in my life which would justify a charge of dishonesty?"

"Dishonesty? There it is, you see; you rich men are so particular. Now, they might charge a poor devil like me with dishonesty to the end of the chapter, and nobody would care a straw about it. Dishonesty? certainly not—of course not. Never heard such a thing hinted at—that I know of."

"You hear that, Mr. Farquhar?" said Rawlings.

"Very singular, indeed."

"Now, Mr. Pogey," continued Rawlings, "as you never heard such a thing hinted at, I suppose

you never could have made such an assertion yourself?"

"I, Mr. Rawlings?" stuttered Pogeey.

"You know Lord Charles Eton, I believe?"

"Know him? Can't say that I know him—can't pretend to that honour exactly—but—yes—I have seen him."

"Precisely; you have seen him. Now, try and recollect whether you ever had any conversation with him about me."

"Well—I think it not improbable."

"Lord Charles seems to have a clearer memory of what you said than you have yourself, Mr. Pogeey. He informs me that my employer, on his deathbed, took me into his confidence, and that I abused the trust he placed in me by turning it to my own advantage; and he gives you up as his authority."

At this point of the conversation, Dingle, with his instinctive delicacy, interposed.

"I'm afraid I'm rather in the way here. No ceremony with me, you know. Only say the word, and I'm gone."

"On no account," said Rawlings; "I should like you to hear Mr. Pogeey's explanation."

Pogeey's face was the picture of consternation.

"Explanation, Mr. Rawlings?" he stammered out; "don't talk in that way. You'll really destroy my nerves. I haven't the stamina I used to have. I'm dilapidated, and find my memory terribly shattered latterly."

"Shattered or not, you must know whether you had any grounds for such a statement."

"None at all—none in the world. What could I know of a breach of trust? I never heard what old Raggles confided to you. If you remember, you wouldn't tell me."

"It is the more extraordinary, then, that, not knowing what the trust was, or whether there was a trust at all, you should assert that I had abused it."

"No! Did I say so? Did I really? Very extraordinary indeed—very. Can't at all account for it, except that my head isn't altogether in a satisfactory condition. Brains, Mr. Rawlings, will suffer—wear and tear—wear and tear."

"How did you become acquainted with Lord Charles Eton?"

"I can explain that. You know I was sold up at Yarlton—obliged to turn to something else; so I laid my case before the Earl of Dragonfelt."

"The Earl of Dragonfelt? Ha!—I see."

"He was always a patron of mine, you know—attended the household round for twenty pounds a year—never lost a patient, though in the long run I lost them all. His lordship couldn't do anything for me—rather hard up himself. Strange reverses in this world, to be sure! But he gave me a letter of introduction to Lord Charles. That was it. Natural, you know, I should speak of you, Mr. Rawlings—of course, that's the way it happened. I dare say I did say something about old Raggles—never could make it out myself—perhaps I said so."

"I think we have got the clue at last, Mr. Farquhar," said Rawlings; "my friend Pogeys is evidently in the interest of his patron, the earl, and, no doubt, thought he might serve his own purposes by retailing a little scandal against me. But we will set that right in a moment. Dingle, will you do me the favour to touch the bell."

Dingle, who was sitting near the bell-rope, gave it a smart pull, while Pogeys remained motionless in his chair, looking as frightened as if he expected to see Lord Charles step into the room to confront him.

The bell was answered by Crikey Snaggs.

"Crikey Snaggs," said Rawlings, "I wish you to be a witness to a statement I have to make to these gentlemen. Shut the door, and stand over there. You remember when Mr. Raggles died?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have lived with me, I believe, ever since?"

"Never been a day from you, sir."

"Very well. I have always told you that if you serve me faithfully I would take care of you."

"And haven't you, sir, more than ever I can repay, if I was to work my hands off. I have reason to pray for you, sir, every night and morning, for I was nothing but an orphan—hadn't a friend in the world when you took me up, and put me to school, and brought me up—and more than that, sir, if you would let me tell it."

"That's enough at present. Now, gentlemen," continued Rawlings, "I feel that I am justified in relieving myself from a responsibility that has long pressed upon me, and which I should have relinquished without calling in witnesses, if I had not been assailed by a foolish and malignant calumny. I must vindicate myself by showing what was the nature of the trust reposed in me by Mr. Raggles, and how I have discharged it."

"La-a!" breathed Pogey hard between his teeth, and listening with intense curiosity—the most lively faculty that remained to him.

"Mr. Raggles," resumed Mr. Rawlings, after a short pause, "had passed through a dissipated youth into an old age of thrift and avarice."

"That's true," cried Pogey; "he lived upon crusts. Never could get him to try a generous diet. Mere skin and bone when he died."

"The follies of his blood were over when I knew him, but they had left a legacy behind which nobody suspected. When he was dying he sent for me, and, as he desired to speak to me alone, I was obliged to get my good friend Pogey, here, who was attending him, to leave us together."

"Ha! ha! I remember!" cried Pogey.

"He had but a few moments to live, but long enough to put me in possession of a pocket-book that contained the one miserable secret of his life, which he had hidden from all the world, and which pressed heavily at that hour upon his conscience. Here is the book exactly as I received it. Upon one of the pages you will find his last will and testament—the only one he could ever prevail upon himself to make—and on a loose sheet of paper an

authority by which I was empowered to carry out its provisions. Will you read it aloud, Mr. Farquhar?"

Mr. Farquhar took the book, and with some difficulty deciphered the writing, which was in a cramped straggling hand.

"I hereby confess myself of all my manifold sins, and ask forgiveness for them at the Throne of Grace, where no sinner, whoso repenteth, is turned away; but in particular that which burdens me most heavily in not acknowledging my own flesh and blood in my natural lifetime, the which I have not done in respect of my dear wife, for her sake. But that it may be done after my death, this is my last will and testament—to wit, and so forth, that I have placed out at interest in the Yarlton Loan and Deposit Bank the sum of 500*l.* sterling, value received, to accrue for the use of Crikey Snaggs, who is my lawfully begotten son out of wedlock before I was married to Barbara Flight, by Susan Jones, her body; and the said Susan Jones being called to her account, the said Crikey Snaggs is to inherit the same for his sole use and benefit. To which I put my hand as witness thereof, and God pardon me my sins and transgressions.

"THOMAS RAGGLES."

The reading of the latter part of this curious document was much interrupted by some wild demonstrations of amazement on the part of Crikey Snaggs. His features passed through a series of contortions, growing white and scarlet by turns, while he twisted his hands and knuckles together in an excruciating manner, uttering a guttural cry that resembled the gurgling scream of a man going off in a fit. A crush of wonders had come upon him all at once—the astounding discovery that he had had a father, a fact of which he had been accustomed all his life to entertain a considerable doubt; then that his father should be no other than Mr. Raggles, a person he always thought of with a feeling of awe; and then the legacy of 500*l.*! Altogether he was quite thrown out of his equilibrium, and nothing but the presence of Richard Rawlings restrained him from indulging in a dance of frenzy about the room.

Having concluded the will and testament, Mr. Farquhar proceeded to read the other document, which contained merely an authority to Richard Rawlings, in the same to-wit and so-forth style, to dispose of the 500*l.* for the benefit of the aforesaid Crikey Snaggs. It was apparently of subsequent

date to the former, and, from the tremor and uncertainty of the penmanship, seemed to have been written only a short time before the death of the testator.

"You will perceive," observed Rawlings, "that the secret was not mine to disclose. How far I have discharged the trust so strangely put upon me, you have in part heard from the young man himself. I took some pains about his education, enabled him from time to time to collect little savings, and I believe at this moment he is pretty well off for a person in his situation in life."

Crikey testified to the fact, by a convulsive effort to express his gratitude, which the other motioned him to suppress.

"I take no credit to myself," continued Rawlings, "for what I have done. Crikey is not my debtor—the obligation is the other way. When I received that 500*l.* for his use, I found he had been so ill-cared for, morally and physically, that I could not apply it to his benefit at once, and thought the best thing I could do for him was to bring him up in my own house till the time came when he might be able to make the most of his advantages. In the mean while I held it in my own hands, and employed

it successfully. It was so useful to me at that time, that we are fairly quits on the score of obligation. And now," he added, drawing a small strip of paper from his pocket, "the time has arrived when I may resign my trusteeship, and in your presence hand over the amount of the legacy, to which I have added a trifle as a reward for faithful services."

Pogey looked sadly bewildered throughout this scene. He was labouring under the disagreeable sensations of a culprit who had been fairly detected, rebuked, and dismissed to "sin no more." The good sense and generosity displayed in the conduct of this transaction by Richard Rawlings, confused and overwhelmed him; but he contrived to splutter out some flourishing apophthegms notwithstanding.

"Very astonishing, indeed! Old Raggles of all men—that Crikey Snaggs should be his son! I must say, I always thought there was something peculiar, remarkably peculiar, about Crikey. Five hundred pounds! Incredible, isn't it? That Crikey Snaggs should actually be worth five hundred pounds, and I, who have been working at a profession for half a century, not worth a doit! The voyage of life, sir!—strange, how some men are

tossed about to be sure, while others sail direct into port. Can't comprehend it."

"Yet it is easily comprehended, Mr. Pogey," observed Rawlings; "men who are always trimming their sails and tacking about with every wind cannot expect to make land like men who pursue a straight course on their voyage; and it is not very surprising if they should be shipwrecked at last. I'm afraid that's your case; and if you will allow me to give you a little friendly advice, I would recommend you in future not to trust too much to your skill in tacking, but to make the best headway you can. In this instance you have made an egregious blunder, for you have failed in securing the patronage of Lord Charles Eton, which you hoped to propitiate by casting odium upon me, and you have forfeited for ever all claim upon any services I might have been disposed to render you. You have trimmed between us till you have lost both."

It was a severe lesson to poor chapfallen Pogey. He felt as if his whole life had been that instant swept up like so much dust, and blown out of the window. He wished he could be blown out of the window himself, or up the chimney, or anywhere,

so that he could only get out of the presence of that stony man. Never was a system of philosophy so shattered at a single blow, just like a house of cards knocked down by a wave of the finger; and never was a man so delighted as Pogeey when he escaped at last clear out of the house under the arm of the good-natured Dingle, whom he entertained all the way down the street with a heartrending homily on the vicissitudes of life, rounding it off by declaring that much as he had studied human nature, he was puzzled more than ever to make it out.

Crikey lingered in the room, as if he had something on his mind to say, but didn't know exactly how to say it.

"Well, Crikey," said Rawlings, "what is it? What can I do for you?"

"Why, sir, if I might make bold, sir," said Crikey, crumpling the cheque in his hand, and looking down slyly at the carpet, "I wanted to know, sir, what name I'm to go by. Are they to call me Crikey Raggles, if you please, sir?"

"No—no—" replied Rawlings, "we'll not trouble you to go to the Herald's Office. You had better keep the name you're used to, Crikey. Only

take care of your money, and your name will take care of itself."

"Thank you, sir," returned Crikey; "but if you'd only please to do something with it for me——"

"Well—we must see about that another time. Now, Mr. Farquhar," continued Rawlings, when Crikey had left the room, "what is your opinion of Lord Charles Eton?"

"I am compelled to form a very poor opinion of his discretion; but I will explain to him the injustice he has fallen into, and I hope it will have the effect of bringing about a better understanding between you."

"It is too late," said Rawlings; "a man who runs away from a falling house, is not likely to be drawn back when it is in ruins. I know him thoroughly——"

"I hope your affairs are not so involved as you seem to apprehend."

"You shall judge for yourself. I have been brought in as a principal, where I acted only as an agent, to an extent that, if carried against me, would absorb more than double the amount I am

worth in the world. I know these demands could not be sustained in law—but Chancery is not law, and, to escape annihilation in Chancery, I am compelled to compound and make the best terms I can. I have fought the battle to the last, and am beaten by a system of terror which hangs chains on the limbs of justice, in the shape of costs. Whether you have right or wrong on your side, the chances are that you will be beggared in the long run. No man with his eyes open would incur such a risk as that, and my whole struggle at this moment is to snatch something out of the wreck. No matter! I am prepared for the worst. I have eaten the bread of luxury—eaten it till it palled upon me—and found it rank and bitter to the taste.”

“I will make no professions at such a moment, Mr. Rawlings; but I am deeply grieved at this information. It may be in my power to diminish something of the severity of this trial; need I assure you——”

“I thank you,” interrupted Rawlings; “I thank you. If I betray a weakness which a man of courage at such a time should wrestle with and vanquish, it is not on my own account. There is no future for me. I have fallen from the height I climbed; let me be

crushed. But you, who have shown such magnanimity—who link yourself with us in our ruin—it is for you I feel; it is there—there, I suffer.”

“I understand your feeling, and appreciate it. Happily, I can afford to dispense with the fortune which I know it would have gratified you to bestow on Clara. Give her to me without a shilling, and I shall consider myself enriched far beyond my deserts.”

Richard Rawlings struggled to control his emotion; but it was evident that the effort he had undergone in making this communication had shaken him severely. He trembled violently; and clasping Farquhar’s hand, with an agitation which he in vain endeavoured to dissemble, cried:

“I will send her to you.”

And, like one whose eyes were struck with darkness, staggered blindly out of the room.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RETURN AFTER THE DUEL.

THE fog still hung heavily over the streets, growing darker and darker as the morning advanced, when a postchaise slowly entered Portman-square, and stopped opposite the door of Lord William Eton's house. Fletcher, the confidential servant of Lord Charles, had apparently been on the watch for its return; and, opening the hall door as it drew up, looked out, with an expression of inquisitive anxiety on his face. Colonel Beauchamp having alighted, and left the surgeon in charge of his wounded friend, beckoned Fletcher aside.

"Is Lord William down yet?"

"He is at breakfast, sir."

"Let him know that I should be glad to speak with him presently; and, Fletcher, keep the servants out of the hall for a few minutes. Is Lady Charles up?"

"I believe she is dressing, sir."

Fletcher glided back into the house.

Lord Charles was conveyed into the hall with difficulty. He had suffered severely from the motion of the carriage, which the surgeon would have obviated by procuring a litter, but his lordship was obstinate, and overruled him. His pride, galled and humiliated by the triumph of his antagonist, was paramount to the sense of danger. He would have borne, without wincing, tenfold the pain that racked him, rather than have avowed the full extent of it. But pain will assert its mastery over the stubborn spirit at last; and when his lordship was carried into the study, at the back of the dining-room—for it was impossible to get him up-stairs into his own chamber—the struggle was over, and he fainted.

Silent movements, whispering, and stealthy steps, indicated the preparations that were making for converting the room into a sick chamber. His lordship was undressed, and placed upon a large couch; and the surgeon, having now examined the nature of the wound more carefully, declared that he did not like to assume the whole responsibility himself, and that it would be necessary at once to hold a consul-

tation. In the mean while the requisite measures were taken to ensure quietness: Fletcher was placed in attendance, and Colonel Beauchamp proceeded to communicate the distressing intelligence to Lord William Eton.

His lordship was strongly attached to his nephew. It was the only domestic tie he had cherished through a life of what may be described as town asceticism. Harsh and repulsive to the rest of the world, this was the relenting point of his character, at which his affections flowed out freely from their pent-up channels. The news of the disaster that had happened shook him fearfully. Of all men, Lord Charles was the last he should have expected to find engaged in such an affair; but the reflection that was hardest to bear, and hurt him most, was that his nephew should have concealed it from him. Had he taken him into his confidence, the terrible catastrophe might have been averted.

“A heavy responsibility rests on you, Colonel Beauchamp,” he said, “for not having consulted me on this business. You, sir, are an older man than Lord Charles; and at your time of life, with your experience, what was the reason you did not instantly

inform me of what was going on? You have acted ill, sir,—ill, sir; very ill.”

“Pardon me, my lord,” replied the colonel; “we must not judge these matters by results. Your nephew’s reputation was at stake; and, as a military man, honoured by his confidence, I dared not have acted otherwise than I did.”

“Reputation! Do you think, sir, I would have risked his reputation? It was dearer to me than my life. Do you suppose I would have suffered him to lie under an insult? But it is too late to talk about it now. What does the surgeon say? Is there any danger?”

“At three o’clock there will be a consultation, and nothing can be determined with certainty till then. All that can be done at present is to keep him quiet. Marsh has left instructions with Fletcher, and will return himself presently. Let me advise you not to see him yet.”

“Not see him? But I will see him, sir. What! not see my boy that I have trained up from childhood, my companion, my dear boy Charles? I have seen as much of the world as most men, Colonel Beauchamp, and have had some trials—bitter ones—in my time: but this—this,—is the greatest blow

of all. Don't be alarmed—I will not disturb him—I will not speak to him—but I must see him.”

“The least excitement may be attended with dangerous consequences. Marsh impressed that upon us.”

“Yes, yes—I understand.”

“I was anxious, my lord, to say something else to you. It is necessary that this matter should be broken to Lady Charles.”

“Poor soul—poor soul!”

“Perhaps, my lord, you would undertake——”

“Well—by-and-by. Just see if I can go into the room.”

Colonel Beauchamp withdrew, and left his lordship alone. The portraits of the Eton family looked down upon him from the walls. His eye rested on Grace Hunsdon, and the picture recalled to him the conversation he had had with Lord Charles when the union with Margaret Rawlings was first discussed between them, and he involuntarily contrasted the happy fate of that poor peasant girl with the doom that was hanging over the richly dowered Margaret. He almost blamed himself for giving way to his nephew's arguments on that occasion, and felt in some measure responsible to her for the blight

that would fall upon her life if this affair should prove fatal to her husband. He was not unconscious of the unhappiness that attended their marriage; he even felt at this moment of poignant grief that he had in some measure contributed to it himself; and the sympathy which springs from a common calamity, gave her a new interest in his heart. Thinking of what she had suffered—of the isolation of her position—her youth—and the trial that lay before her, he was more touched by her bereavement than his own.

Lord William Eton was not the sort of man of whom such generous and kindly emotions could have been predicated on the surface; but how little do we know of the latent sensibilities of men in their ordinary intercourse with the world!

In a few minutes Colonel Beauchamp returned; and Lord William descended with him to the study. The room was carefully darkened, and fearful of disturbing the patient, they entered noiselessly. Lord William approached the head of the couch, and bent down to listen. His nephew was breathing hardly, and unconscious of his presence. The case seemed even worse than he had feared, and he drew back with a slight tremor, and passed his hand over his

eyes. There was a rustle at the door, and standing in the dim light of the hall, as if she were hesitating whether she should come in, he discerned the figure of Lady Charles. Colonel Beauchamp was interposing to prevent her entrance with a motion of his hands, entreating her to retire. It was no place for her.

“What is the matter?” she demanded, in a low voice of Colonel Beauchamp.

“Hush!—madam—not here,” he returned.

Lord William, summoning up a great effort for the painful task he had to perform, went towards the door, and as he passed out to Lady Charles, Colonel Beauchamp whispered to him, “Better not tell her the particulars.”

She was standing there mute and paralysed. Lord William took her gently by the hand, and led her away.

“Patience—patience, and you shall know everything. We must control ourselves for *his* sake.”

The tone of his voice affected her more than his words. There was a tenderness in it which made tears spring into her eyes. It was the first time he had ever spoken to her so softly—the first accents of sympathy, or comfort, or affection—and they were

all blended in his subdued and tremulous voice—she had ever heard in that house.]

“We must be patient, and hope for the best,” he said. Both her hands were clasped in his, and, as he looked into her pallid face, full of terror and confusion, the habitual harshness of his features appeared to her changed into an expression of pity and affliction.

“What is it, my lord?” she exclaimed; “what has happened?”

“Lord Charles has met with an accident—I hope not very serious. But you must control yourself. You know how necessary it is that we should not betray any emotion before him?”

“What accident? I entreat of you to relieve me from this dreadful suspense. May I not go to him and attend him?”

“Not at present. He must be kept very quiet, and your presence would only agitate him.”

“You do not answer my question. How did it happen? He went out early this morning, and has met with an accident. How—where—what is it?”

“Margaret,” replied his lordship, “I expect you will act with courage and resignation, when I have told you what has happened. I am not justified in

concealing it from you; but I expect you will bear it patiently. Women have more patience and endurance than we have, and I look to you for an example of that fortitude which, I confess, I find it not easy to exercise myself."

"Indeed, my lord," she returned, "I am very grateful to you for the kindness and consideration you show me. I will try and act as you would have me. It has been my constant desire to do so."

"I know it—I feel it; and I owe you some atonement for the unhappiness I have observed growing upon you in this house. Your life here has not been what a young wife had a right to anticipate. We have been harsh—harsh; our habits and mode of life, and let me say, some pride of lineage, made us cold to you. No—you must hear me—it eases my heart to speak to you; it is not a time for pride now, when he, in whom all my ambition was centred, lies, perhaps—but we must hope the best."

"He is not in danger, my lord?"

"I cannot answer for that. We shall know the worst presently. I am an old man, and have had calamities to bear like other men. They shut up my heart from the world. You see what a solitary life I lead—but I was not always a misanthrope. Margaret!

we will not speak of that. This trouble has touched a chord I had hoped was silent for ever. From a certain period I relinquished society—there was no pleasure or joy in it for me. I garnered up all my hopes and affections in *him*—it was the object that engrossed me; and now, should this accident end badly, my pride will be rebuked, and turned to dust!”

He covered his face with his hands, and Margaret, in the depth of her fear of what was coming, held a breathless silence.

“But you will be left to me,” he resumed; “you bear his name—he told me he loved you. It was that which won my consent to your marriage. I believed you loved him, and, harsh as you think me, I resigned all the views I had for him from that consideration alone.”

“You wring my heart, my lord—I so little expected this from you.”

“I have judged more wisely since. Charles is a man of ambition, qualified by nature and education to make a great figure in the world. Men of that kind are not always as tender as they might be of the feelings of women. But, if this affliction should pass from us, he will prize you more highly than

ever. You deserve it—and it shall be my grateful task to see that you are cared for, and nurtured as you deserve.”

“ Oh! my lord—pray spare me. Your goodness overwhelms me. I hardly know what to say or think. I fear to ask.”

“ I promised to tell you what has happened; and, indeed, it cannot be concealed, and it is better you should hear it from me, than that it should reach you from any other quarter. Lord Charles, I hardly know how it occurred, or what it arose from, was drawn unfortunately into a quarrel. It is gratifying to know that he was not the aggressor, and that the slightest blame does not rest upon him—I am assured of that.”

“ A quarrel, my lord? When?—with whom?”

“ It seems that it took place under very strange circumstances the other evening at the Opera.”

“ At the Opera?—My God!”

“ Margaret!—you must be more firm. Look up—compose yourself.”

“ I dare not ask you—do not tell me—who?—no—no—do not tell me who it was—I would rather be ignorant of that—hide it from me, my lord. Oh! God, now indeed, my cup of wretchedness is full.”

"I am not surprised at this emotion. It is natural you should regard with horror the man who has brought this upon us. But we must be just even to him, Margaret. We must not allow our grief to stifle our justice. If it be found that his conduct is capable of vindication, we must subdue our feelings, and be silent. It is only reasonable to remember that he took his chance of the issue, and might have been the victim of it himself."

"Ah! Lord William—what a noble and generous heart you have. And Lord Charles is wounded—it is horrible to think of it! What do they say?"

"Marsh, the surgeon, is attending him, but declines to give any opinion until he has had a consultation. This looks bad—it may be over-caution, or anxiety; yet we must not conceal from ourselves, that, if the wound were slight, he would have no difficulty in saying so at once. That is the worst feature of the case?"

"When may I be permitted to see him?"

"That must be determined by the medical men. You had better send for your sister, and let her remain with you. I promise you that as soon as they consider it safe, you shall be admitted; and I am sure you will act with discretion—his life may depend upon it."

The agony that Margaret underwent through the latter part of this conversation, was rendered more intense by the necessity of concealing the apprehensions it suggested. She ran over in her mind all the incidents of that fatal evening—the wild manner of Henry Winston—the sullenness of Lord Charles—and then this duel following so rapidly—all seemed clear, except that she could not comprehend when or how the quarrel took place, for Lord Charles entered her box almost immediately after the departure of Henry Winston, who would never have visited her if they had quarrelled previously. In putting all these things together, the difficulty was to understand when it occurred. Yet it was at the Opera, and who could it be if it was not Henry Winston? She wished to believe it was any one else—she recoiled from the thought that it came from *his* hand.

She was not suffered to remain long in suspense. A low knock at the door startled her out of this train of speculations, followed by the entrance of Fletcher, who in dumb show drew Lord William aside, and whispered him.

“To inquire?” demanded Lord William.

“Yes, my lord.”

"The gentleman himself?"

"No, my lord—a servant, with Mr. Winston's compliments."

Margaret caught the name, and gasped—"Who is it, Fletcher?"

Fletcher looked at Lord William.

"My compliments," said Lord William, drawing himself up with dignity, "his lordship is going on, we hope, favourably."

Fletcher withdrew.

"You will not deceive me, I know," exclaimed Margaret, grasping Lord William by the arm, and gazing earnestly into his face; "I am sure I heard the name—what did *he* want here?"

"To inquire after Charles."

"He?—Henry Winston? I know it was he. Why should *he* inquire?"

"Why? It is not unusual, Margaret—rather creditable to him—though, at this moment, I could have dispensed with his courtesy."

"Not unusual? If you have the least pity for me, you will explain what this means. I have known Henry Winston all my life—we were children together—Lord Charles knew him at college—they were then inseparable—oh! could I blot out

that from my memory—could I forget the things that happened—you shall judge for me, Lord William, what must be my despair to think that it is from his hand Lord Charles is suffering—perhaps by his hand—my senses will forsake me!”

“Then you know the cause of their quarrel?”

“It *was* he!—I knew it—it *was* Henry Winston!”

“I will not deceive you. It was Mr. Winston.”

“Merciful Heaven! that I should be the cause of this!” The exclamation escaped her, and it was scarcely uttered, when she would have recalled it—but it was too late.

“You?” exclaimed Lord William, recoiling from her with a look of astonishment.

“No—I did not mean that. I am ignorant of how or when they quarrelled. It has come upon me like an avalanche, and seems to carry away my reason. Do not heed my words. I know nothing.”

Lord William felt that there was a deeper import in that burst of emotion than mere alarm or surprise; but in the state of nervous agitation into which she was thrown, it was necessary to approach the subject cautiously. He led her gently to a seat, entreating her to collect herself, and went on.

"I was aware that Mr. Winston was formerly acquainted with Lord Charles; but I did not know he was a friend of yours."

"It was before our marriage, my lord—we have not met since—I have never seen him, or heard of him since, till that evening at the Opera."

"Did you meet by accident at the Opera?"

"I implore you to ask me no more questions. I know nothing of what happened."

"There is something in this unfortunate affair you are anxious to conceal from me, Margaret. I cannot, of course, divine your reasons; but you wrong me and yourself by withholding your confidence from me."

"Indeed, I would trust you with my most secret thoughts—you are too noble not to decide justly and compassionately—but this—I dare not—to you!—no—no—I dare not!"

"Yes—to me of all men you may most safely open your heart. You think that my affection for Charles would prejudice my judgment. You do me an injustice. You do not know me—we have not hitherto known each other as we ought—we have been estranged, and an unnatural distance has been between us—but we must make amends to each other

in the future. Whatever befalls us, Margaret, for good or ill, you must learn to look upon me as your friend and protector."

"I did not expect this," she replied, in a stifled voice; "I do not deserve it. I now feel how little I understood your worth—your great goodness and kindness—believe me, I am very grateful!" and, bursting into tears, she sank upon her knees at his feet.

"Come—come, not thus."

"No—here on my knees, I will tell you all. There is a load upon my heart—it is crushing me—killing me. I feel I can speak to you now. Give me one moment. We grew up from childhood almost under the same roof; and were never parted till he went to college. We met again in London—early feelings were revived—we—you understand?"

"Clearly. You may spare that explanation."

"How considerate you are. You give me courage to speak. I know not how to tell my story without seeming to bring shame upon myself. You will condemn me—I fear you will; but no condemnation can equal my own remorse. But, indeed, I am not to blame. We were sundered by violence—all hope of happiness in this world went with him.

My father commanded me to receive Lord Charles. What did it matter how they disposed of me? I was a blighted creature, and did not care what doom lay before me. There was no struggle then between my heart and my duty, for in that separation I was betrayed into the belief that he had broken his faith; and in that belief I submitted to my father's will, and—married. But it was false! They had deceived us both—and happy had it been for both had we lived on deceived, and never met again!"

"Was Lord Charles aware of your attachment!"

"I think he must have known it; he could not have mistaken my manner—but no censure upon him! He treated my feelings with forbearance, as if he understood my sufferings, and respected them. I was thankful to him for that, honoured him for it, and believed that I should be able to repay his generosity by dedicating myself to his happiness. I tried—I tried—I banished all thoughts but the one thought of what I owed to him—he was all to me—he might have secured my peace and his own—but——"

Lord William shook his head.

"You have thrown a light upon your mutual position that makes many things clear to me which

were dark before. I will not say to you what I think of his conduct. I ignorantly attributed the coldness I have observed between you to other causes—but its springs are evident now. He knew of your attachment, and married you; and Mr. Winston was his friend! It was base—money on one side, vile ambition on the other—and you, weak, deceived, indifferent to your fate, the victim of both.”

The condition of his nephew, hovering at that moment between life and death, restrained him from giving full vent to his indignation. But he felt keenly and bitterly the wrong that had been done to Margaret, and to which he had been, in some sort, made a party. He had been duped into his consent to the marriage on the plea of love; the story of Grace Hunsdon had been cited to work upon his feelings; and, now that he looked back upon the arguments Lord Charles had employed, he saw that he had cast but a thin disguise over his real motives. Deeply affected by the cruel position in which Margaret was placed, it became no less a point of honour than of feeling with him to sustain and shield her.

Her confidence was full and unreserved. She

detailed all the circumstances of the meeting at the Opera, and the disclosures made by Henry Winston; and when he related to her the particulars of the abrupt rencontre in the lobby, there was no longer any doubt that it occurred immediately after Henry Winston had left her box. Margaret naturally feared that Lord William Eton would take a severe view of the conduct of the aggressor; and it was an unexpected relief to her to find that he pitied rather than blamed him. Had he confessed to her his real feelings, she would have discovered that his sympathies were warmly enlisted on his behalf.

At three o'clock the consultation was held on Lord Charles. The silence that brooded over the house was solemn and painful. The servants were strictly ordered out of the way—not a footfall was heard—and Margaret sat in her room alone, waiting for the return of Lord William. A long interval elapsed—the longer the more fraught with doubts and terrors. At last a step came to the door—she had not strength or energy to rise, but sat, stricken with fear, to receive the intelligence he brought, which she fancied she could anticipate in the stricken expression of his face.

"I understand," she cried convulsively, "there is no hope!"

"Be comforted," he replied, kissing her forehead tenderly; "there is always hope while life remains. We must put our trust in God!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE DUELLO SEEN FROM DIFFERENT POINTS OF SIGHT.

WHEN Henry Winston went out to fight a duel with Lord Charles Eton, it never entered into his calculations to make any provision against such a contingency as that of shooting his antagonist. Few men ever do in these cases. The quarrel is the thing—the consequences are left to take care of themselves. Fortunately he was in the hands of an adviser who was prepared for all emergencies.

They had no sooner got clear of the field, than Costigan ordered the coachman “to drive as if the devil was after him,” and to make a *detour* from the high-road for the purpose, as he informed his friend, of baffling the beaks, should they have got wind of what had happened.

“I fear, from the precautions you are taking,” said Winston, “the wound is dangerous.”

"Well—it's in an ugly place," returned Costigan; "and the bullet is lodged. That's the worst of it. There's no harm, at all events, in being on the safe side; and, until we know how he's going on, you must keep out of the way. The British public have an ignorant prejudice against duelling, which might make it inconvenient for you to be showing yourself about town."

"I shall never forgive myself, Costigan, if this business should end fatally."

"Forgive yourself? What would you be forgiving yourself for? Wasn't it equal main and chance? If it's any ease to your mind, let me tell you it wasn't for want of inclination he didn't whip you through the lungs. He was within a nick of you; his ball ripped up the grass at your feet—there's the spatter of it on your boots. Quarter of an inch higher, and it would have been all up with you. Why then," he exclaimed, thrusting his head out of the window, and shouting to the coachman, "it's a fortune you're losing by not entering them horses for the Derby. I suppose they think we're running a race, they're in such a murderin' hurry."

All this time the horses, notwithstanding, were going at the top of their speed, but Costigan's im-

patience outstripped them. Arrived in Portland-street, he dismissed the carriage, and waiting cautiously till it was out of sight, he hurried Winston into a cab, and drove off to a retired hotel with which he was acquainted, in the neighbourhood of Lincoln's Inn-fields.

"It will never do," he said, when they arrived at the door, "for you to return to your lodgings. I'll be off at once and get the traps away before Mother Stubbs begins to suspect anything. Stay here quietly, and keep yourself to yourself—but we must send up your compliments to inquire how he's going on—that's the least you can do after shooting him under the wing like a garden thrush. Stop a minute," he added, peering into the dark hall of the hotel at a figure that was crossing at the back—"don't I know that figure? No matter—in with you, and up-stairs, and amuse yourself by repeating the Seven Penitential Psalms till I come back." Jumping into the cab, without waiting for a reply, he left Winston alone to indulge in his reflections on the rapid events of the morning.

Discouraging and gloomy enough they were. Whether Lord Charles lived or died, Margaret would never pardon him for that act of violence.

He thought only of her, and of the agony of mind—the terror and remorse—she must have experienced at the sight of the spectacle of blood he had sent home to her. That horrible image, so revolting to the tenderness of a woman under any circumstances, but so cruel and harrowing to a wife, presented itself to him in the most appalling shapes, and filled him with self-reproaches. How could she make allowances for the madness that had instigated him to such an extremity? How could she comprehend the strife and torture of brain and heart he had gone through before he was worked up to a point of despair beyond human endurance, when even all consideration for her gave way before the demoniacal suggestions of revenge? She, whose life was so calm and gentle, who was so disciplined in patience and resignation, how could she understand the tempest that had shaken his reason? Whatever hope he had previously nurtured of being remembered by her with pity, was gone for ever. Her pity was now concentrated on her husband, whom, by that fatal act, he had invested with claims upon her interest which he never possessed before.

He was strongly tempted to write to her—to ex-

plain how it had happened—to deprecate her wrath—to sue for forgiveness. But how could he approach the subject? What arguments could he use? What balm could he offer to her? His very name and handwriting, while she was yet writhing under the shock, would only aggravate her sufferings, and make her hate him the more. He would wait, and watch his opportunity to plead to her for pardon when time should have softened the misery he had so ruthlessly inflicted upon her.

But in any case what had he to hope from her? She could never regard without abhorrence the man who had brought a violent death into her house. A woman's instincts—at least the instincts of such a woman as Margaret—always fly to the side of the injured. There are women whose unscrupulous self-will is capable of trampling down all obstructions, and of purchasing the gratification of their own desires at any cost of suffering and injustice to the feelings and rights of others. But these are not the women whom men love with a serene and abiding faith; these are the women who inspire maddening passions that burn fiercely while they last, and then suddenly go out into darkness and ashes:—idols whom men worship in frenzy for a

.

time, and then turn from with loathing and aversion. Henry Winston could frame a thousand excuses to himself, but could not find one to reconcile what he had done to the pure spirit of Margaret Eton.

The speedy return of Costigan, laden with luggage from Duke-street, interrupted these harassing reflections. It had become necessary to look after Winston's safety, which Costigan held to be paramount to all other considerations. The ambiguous answer from Park-lane did not satisfy him. He secretly believed that Lord Charles was worse than Lord William had represented him to be, and he promised Winston to set out himself in the course of the evening, and ascertain the fact.

Dinner was ordered at five, and the interval passed in laying plans for the future, in case the wound should prove fatal. Costigan urged upon his friend the prudential course of getting out of the way, and for better security running over to the Continent—strengthening his argument by reference to the famous text—

He who fights and runs away
May live to fight another day.

But, unfortunately, of all the reasons he could have selected at that moment for running away, the

prospect of fighting another day was about the least persuasive. Winston declared he would stand his ground, and that no entreaties, arguments, or remonstrances could induce him to alter his determination.

Costigan saw it was useless to persevere, and took advantage of the dinner to change the subject.

"There's somebody in the hotel that knows us," he said; "I caught him looking out for me as I came in, but I gave him the slip."

"Who can it be?" inquired Winston.

"Whoever it is, I have a shrewd suspicion it isn't Lord Charles; so we needn't make ourselves uneasy on that score. A glass of wine with you just to give a flavour to the veal. By my honour, Henry Winston, I'm proud of you. Your conduct this morning reflects immortal credit on you."

"Credit? Let us talk of something else."

Every now and then in his intercourse with Costigan there jarred a chord between them which made Winston secretly recoil from the companionship circumstances had so strangely cast him upon. No two men could be more dissimilar; the coarseness of the one constantly revolted the sensitive nature and fastidious tastes of the other; and there was some-

thing so haggard in the experiences of life which Costigan mapped out in his conversation, that Winston was sometimes conscious of a passing sense of degradation in the intimacy to which he had admitted him. On these occasions he felt lowered and debased; but still he thought himself proof against the taint of manners and opinions he held in such aversion. The real cordiality of Costigan, his untiring good-nature, and a certain touch of softness or tenderness, which, obscure as it was, sometimes showed itself in a most strange and unexpected way, constituted the fascination that bound Winston to him. Besides, he was the only confidant he had, and men are slaves to their confidants in love affairs.

The allusion to his conduct in the morning awoke one of the discords that vibrated most painfully in Winston's heart. Costigan evidently gloried in what had occurred, and, like a professed duellist, regarded it only in its triumphal aspect, which to Winston was a source of the bitterest regret. If he could have had his choice, he would gladly have exchanged situations with Lord Charles—not that he repented the issue on his lordship's account, but for the sake of Margaret. This was a reach of sensibility beyond the compass of Costigan's sympathies; he

could see nothing except the vindicated honour of his friend—for it was all honour and fighting with him, and nothing else, when it once came to that.

His reluctance to speak about the duel threw Costigan into a mood of bantering that made the matter rather worse; and when he began to boast of his pistols, and the execution they had done on former occasions, the thought flashed across Winston's mind, for the first time, that it was the possession of these very pistols, and the brooding over them in the country, which suggested to him, and kept perpetually before him, the design of fixing a quarrel on Lord Charles.

"Ay—those pistols. They were always in my room. I looked at them every day. You remember what I said to you in my letter about them—I wondered should I ever have any use for them. I was like a man in a frightful dream; the dream is out. *I have* used them, and they served me well!"

He looked across the table as he spoke, and the broad, wild face of Costigan, overspread with a lambent glow of satisfaction, seemed like the face of the Tempter, who had led him into the snares, and now exulted over his work. The feeling it inspired was dangerous, but he gulped it down in a glass of wine.

He remembered the kindness he had so often tested in that rough, ill-regulated nature, and he felt that if Costigan had counselled him unwisely, and tempted him to an act which would cast its shadow over his whole life, it was the error of his judgment, his habits and associations, and not of his heart. The fault was in his own impetuous temperament; and, with a generosity as impulsive as the rising reproaches it suppressed, he took the entire blame upon himself.

They had scarcely finished dinner, when they were startled by a sharp knock at the door. Costigan, who was one of those men that will never be taken alive, immediately started to his feet; but, before he could secure the door, it was somewhat unceremoniously opened, and Mr. Trumbull, to their mutual surprise, made his appearance in the room.

"I expect," said he, "that you are rather astonished at seeing me; but the fact is, I have picked up at this hotel, and I thought I would just look in to see how you were getting on, as you are likely to be a little out of sorts by yourselves this evening. I'm a pretty good judge of human nature, and it strikes me that when a man's in trouble, a friendly visit is a sort of social duty. That's the way I look at it, Mr. Winston."

Henry Winston was the more surprised at this friendly visit, as his acquaintance with Mr. Trumbull was very slight, but his surprise was considerably increased by the knowledge that gentleman seemed to possess of the circumstances in which he was placed. Mr. Trumbull soon left him in no doubt on the subject.

"It's pretty well known, I calculate, by this time at the West End," he observed; "I was calling this afternoon at Park-lane, and Mrs. Rawlings told me all the particulars."

"I hope," said Costigan, "you didn't say you had seen us here?"

"I haven't studied the customs of this remarkable nation in vain, Mr. Costigan. Secrecy is an element in your institutions, which, as a free-born republican, I abjure; but, as a stranger, I am bound to respect your usages, while I am enjoying your hospitality. It will be time enough when I get back to my own everlasting State of Massachusetts to enlighten the world as to my real opinion of England."

"You intend to write a book upon us, then?" said Winston, glad of any pretext for changing the subject.

"Most assuredly. I have a sample or two of it

in my pocket, if you'd like to hear how I walk into you. But I calculate you're hardly up to the mark for that, Mr. Winston. Your mind must be in a pretty considerable fix, and not exactly in a condition to enter upon philosophical inquiries. There again your institutions come in, extinguishing freedom of thought, and riling up your twenty-five millions of human beings, just as if they were so many niggers. It's my clear conviction that it's only under a democratic form of government the rights of man are eternally vindicated—that's a fact. If one gentleman has a wrong to settle with another, in my country, he may go slick at him, and shoot him in the streets. Now, if that ain't practical liberty, I should like to know under what part of the almighty canopy you're to find it?"

"Indeed, we should be at a loss to find it in such perfection anywhere else," observed Costigan, with a humorous twinkle in his eyes; "you're entirely right, Mr. Trumbull. That's the only country for a gentleman to live in. It's free and easy, it is, at all events; and I'm sorry to say that, in that particular, we're in a mighty benighted condition."

"You're out of sight behind us in the grand features of social progress and civilisation. And

you'll never rise to a dignified rank in the scale of nations till you get rid of your aristocracy, and establish liberty and equality over the length and breadth of the land. Your aristocracy, Mr. Costigan, is a regular system of slavery, and puts its brand upon you, just as the farmers brand cattle. The people have no more moral elevation than sheep in this country. I presume you won't deny that. Look at your hotels and public-houses: it seems to me as if the eternal 'coons gloried in their degradation, for everywhere you go you see them sticking up, in conspicuous signs, "The Marquis of Granby" and "The Duke of Wellington," and this lord's arms and that lord's arms. All England is branded over with the family marks of the proprietary class. That's one of the observations in my book."

"But, in the matter of duels, now," inquired Costigan; "how do you manage that in America?"

"There again," returned Trumbull, "we're ahead of you in a remarkable manner. All our institutions acknowledge the original law of individual freedom. Every man in the Union possesses the inalienable right of fighting a duel in his own way. That's a fundamental principle. Our free citizens meet on a perfect equality; each man chooses his own weapon,

and uses it at his discretion. They walk up to each other, and fire when they please; a privilege, I reckon, you're not likely to enjoy in this country till you make a clearance of your hereditary classes."

"I'm afraid not," returned Costigan.

"Now, just look at what you call public opinion, what a teetotal crusher it is of personal independence. No man can do as he likes here; he must do what other people like—that's a humiliating truth. If one man shoots another in the Union, it's his own business, and nobody meddles with him; but, if you take the law into your own hands here, which you'd have a clear right to do, if you were a freeborn citizen, you've no more chance of your life than if you were pitched into a biler, and stewed down into soup. Now, Mr. Winston, that's the precise thing I came to talk to you about. From what I heard this evening, Lord Charles is in rather a dubious state, and, if he should sink under it, this is no place for you. I don't want to make any professions; but I esteem it a great privilege to do homage to a man of your stamp. I was born in Massachusetts, am true whalebone, stub-twisted back and front, and no man in my country stands up against me without losing wind. Now, I'm going back by the States packet-

ship *Old Virginny*, Captain Maddison Sandys, and if you'll put yourself under the shadow of Washington Trumbull, with the eternal banner of stripes and stars floating over you, I'll land you at New York, to the national anthem of 'Hail Colombia!' and guarantee you liberty and security for the rest of your life."

This proposal was made with so much sincerity that Henry Winston, although a little inclined to be annoyed at the intrusion of a comparative stranger at such a moment, thanked Trumbull for the interest he took in his affairs, assuring him, at the same time, that he had no intention whatever of leaving England. In vain Trumbull described the enthusiasm with which he would be received in America, when it came to be known that he had been engaged in mortal combat with a lord, pledging himself that, if money was any consideration, he might make a fortune by lecturing through the States on the custom of duelling, as it is practised under slavish restrictions in the old class-ridden feudal communities. These alluring representations failed to convince the obstinate young gentleman to whom they were addressed. He still held to his resolution. Let the consequences be what they might, he had secretly set

his heart upon seeing Margaret once more, and, when that was over, the rest of his life was a matter of perfect indifference to him.

Trumbull, compelled to relinquish a project, by which he had hoped to secure a new lion for the gaze of his admiring countrymen, with a side view to the popularity of his contemplated book, in which he intended to give a circumstantial narrative of the duel, turned the conversation to other topics. He was a speculator on a large scale. He never missed a chance of picking up a trifle of information; and, if he could not procure extensive data, which, indeed, he seldom took the trouble to go in quest of, he made no scruple in drawing general inferences from particular facts, without being very particular in testing their correctness. Whatever he happened to see or hear, he took for granted as an illustration of universal modes and customs; so that his book, from which he read a variety of singular specimens, might have been appropriately designated "*Curiosities from the Social Experiences of a Gobe-mouche*."

Winston's anxiety to obtain intelligence about Lord Charles made him rather impatient of Mr. Trumbull's criticisms on England and the English; and, after an hour or two wasted upon subjects

extremely uninteresting to him, and especially distasteful under existing circumstances, he reminded Costigan of his promise to ascertain how Lord Charles was going on. A difficulty presented itself which, in the eagerness of his feelings, Costigan had not thought of before. The second was as much compromised as the principal, and it would have been hazardous in Costigan to present himself in person to make such inquiries. The difficulty, however, was removed by Trumbull, who, volunteering his services, started at once with Costigan for Portman-square.

Henry Winston was again left alone. An hour passed away, which he contrived to fill up with a multitude of ingenious self-tortures. The future shaped itself before him in a wild phantasmagoria of gloomy pictures, brightened here and there by rays of hope, that vanished as quickly as they came; and long before his reveries were interrupted by the return of his friends, he had succeeded in working himself into a most dreary and uncomfortable mood. The news he received operated beneficially on these morbid feelings, by at least resolving all doubt into certainty, and awakening him, with electric force, to the necessity of action.

It had been arranged between Trumbull and Costigan that the latter should announce the intelligence they had obtained; and he began with an exordium which so painfully delayed, while it betrayed the truth, that Winston, unable to endure the suspense, sprang from his chair, and appealed to Trumbull to relieve him, by telling him the worst at once.

It was told in one word. Lord Charles Eton was dead!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LAST TRIAL.

DEATH, even when it has given long notice of its approach, is a dismal thing in a house; but more dismal still when it comes suddenly and violently in the midst of health, and in the confidence of manhood. Although the dead be one who had not drawn around him a solitary affection, he is missed when he is gone; his loss severs some ties, breaks up the routine of old habits, and leaves a blank behind which time alone can fill with new associations and altered prospects.

Lord Charles Eton had not cultivated one ardent friendship; and in his own home, where love might have grown had he cared to nurture it, the air was too cold for hearts to flower in. His uncle alone was strongly attached to him; but it was less a feeling of affection than a sentiment of pride, cherished

and dwelt upon in solitude, till it became a sort of necessity of his existence. Yet, unloveable as he was in his life, his death was a trouble in the small circle which it deprived of a familiar face and an accustomed footstep.

Abroad in the world, through which he had moved with such a show of graciousness, there was a slight sensation—hardly of regret, rather of surprise and curiosity; people thought it very shocking; got up a story about the quarrel—which occupied them more than its issue,—and then something else started up, and they forgot him in a week.

To Margaret, there was an undefined terror in the event, which fascinated her reason. She was stunned by its suddenness. There wasn't time to think clearly, or to test her own feelings. The first impulse was self-examination. Had she been just to him? Had she made allowances for his temper? Had she estimated his character truly? Was there no fault at her side? Could she have averted that alienation which had recently divided them? Could she have reconciled the family feud in the heat of which he was struck down? A hundred such hurried questions and half-accusations thronged upon her mind. She looked back upon her marriage,

and gathered up recollections of Lord Charles which, softened by distance and hallowed by natural regrets, drew out traits of his nature which she feared she had never appreciated; and when her thoughts reverted to Henry Winston, a shudder passed over her. She shrank from the train of memories his image called up, and tried not to think of him, as a person toiling through the mazes of a hideous dream, in which the forms of beloved objects are shown in agonies and distortion, endeavours in vain to shut them out. Henry Winston would still recur to her, let her seek to banish him as she might.

The bereavement of Lord William Eton was rendered less overwhelming by the disclosures Margaret had made to him, which shook his high opinion of Lord Charles, and created a new claim upon his sympathies. The place which the death of his nephew left vacant in his heart and household, was insensibly occupied by her whom that nephew had so grievously wronged; and it was a balm and solace to him to tend and console her. His character had undergone a change. Austerity and harshness had given way to kindliness and forbearance. Their relations were no longer formal and reserved; in the hour of domestic sorrow their hearts opened

to each other, and the conventional distinctions which had hitherto kept them apart, melted before the reality which pointed to that world where the pomps and vanities of earth are of no more account than the dust that lies mouldering in the coffin.

Clara, at the suggestion of Lord William Eton, had come to Portman-square after the death of Lord Charles. Mrs. Rawlings called every day; but her visits were not of much comfort to Margaret. She had got into a way of babbling, which is very oppressive to people who are suffering under mental distress. The good woman talked unwisely to her daughter; much, indeed, in the same strain as Nurse Waters had long ago talked to her when she had lost her own husband. She could see no help for any misfortune but to look forward and not think about it: the world was wide, and there were plenty of people in it; and Margaret was never very happy with Lord Charles; she knew well enough that, when she married him, she loved Henry Winston; it was wonderful, to be sure, what turns things take; look at herself—there was Rawlings nearly out of his mind with trouble, and she didn't know how long she'd have a house over her head, and wished she could only see the end of it; and, for her own part, she

longed to get out of it all, and be at peace; and a great deal more to the same effect, slightly incoherent, and puncturing the wounds it was intended to heal. The truth was, that poor Mrs. Rawlings, who never was remarkable for the strength of her intellect, had latterly grown very garrulous; her thoughts had begun to ravel in an odd way; and she would talk on ahead, if anybody would listen to her, not very clearly or sensibly; and tears would sometimes start into her eyes, and stand there helplessly on the lids, as if they did not know why they were summoned, and had come there without any ostensible cause. She was not a woman to stand up against calamity, but to lie down under it; her escape was in the weakness of her nature; but even this refuge was failing her now. The pressure was too severe to be evaded in the old way; and many little symptoms were becoming perceptible in her looks and her "bald talk," of that confusion and scattering of ideas which are preliminary, in people of feeble constitution, to a general break-up of the faculties. Everybody was indulgent to her, and suffered her to chatter without interruption. It was the only pleasure she had—that incessant drivel, so full of curious little good-natured cross-purposes, and wandering platitudes!

Mr. Rawlings had called once or twice, but had not yet seen Margaret. They were naturally reluctant to meet. She dreaded the first interview with her father; and many weeks elapsed before she received him.

One evening Lord William desired to see her in the drawing-room. He had hitherto spoken but little to her on the subjects that most occupied their thoughts; and now that she was more calm and composed, he felt it no longer necessary to observe any restraint.

"I wished to have a little quiet conversation with you, Margaret, if you think you are well enough to bear it."

"I was anxious for it myself, my lord," she replied; "I feel it would be a relief to me."

"You are aware of the result of the inquiry into that unfortunate business, and that I have been urged to sanction legal measures against Mr. Winston?"

"Yes—I have heard so."

"I refused to lend my name to such a proceeding. No consideration could induce me to consent to it. I mention this to put your mind at rest."

"It was very generous and noble—considering how you loved him!"

"My love for him, Margaret, did not extend to his errors. But we will not talk of that. I felt that if the family of Lord Charles Eton showed any vindictive feeling to Mr. Winston, they would have done you an additional wrong. He has not been heard of since, and I presume he is now beyond the reach of danger. If he be prudent, and keep out of England for a time, he may one day return with safety. After all, it was an act committed in the heat of passion; he did no more than others might have done—than others have done."

"It is for my sake, my lord, you are so lenient to him. But it was a great crime—and I sicken to think that he was guilty of it."

"Not for your sake alone," he exclaimed; then paused for a moment. "Margaret, I dare not call Mr. Winston to account. I owe it to myself to screen and save him."

"My lord!"

"Be patient and listen to me. I speak to you of things that have been shut up in my life, and made me the lonely man you have known me; and when

I see in the circumstances which have befallen others, a fatal recollection of my own early history revived before me, almost exactly as it happened to myself, you cannot be much surprised at my forbearance."

"Happened to you, Lord William? Did you, too, once love as he did—and——?"

"If you will not think it an unpardonable folly," said Lord William, smiling, "in a man of my age and habits to carry about such a memory with him, and to preserve it as freshly as if it were an incident of yesterday, when he ought to be more sensibly employed—I may confess as much to you. Most men love in their youth. Why might not I? Men generally forget these things—they are swept away into the current of graver occupations. Age brings a different set of feelings—throws us in more upon ourselves—aches, and wants, and physical infirmities give us enough to do, without troubling ourselves with love—and so our enthusiasm goes and our elasticity, and we are glad enough to escape from our sentimental devotions, and look to our diet and our rheumatism. But circumstances will sometimes, in spite of us, recal these memories, and keep them

alive. With me it has never slumbered—it was seared upon my heart, and its mark is there still.”

“But what was it? How does Mr. Winston’s case resemble yours?”

“I opposed your marriage with Lord Charles on the ground of inequality of birth; but it was not from mere pride of lineage—although I suffered him to think so. It touched me closer. In my youth, Margaret, I thought no man ever loved so madly—and I am half-ashamed to say that, through the long mist of years, I think so even now! She was not in my own rank of life—that heightened the romance on both sides, and we were prepared to sacrifice the world for each other. In this extremity I was compelled to confide my secret to a friend, in whose honour I would have reposed my life. He deceived me—he deceived her—falsified me to her—appealed to her pride—provoked her resentment—and succeeded in his treachery. She who was to have been my wife, ensnared by the basest artifices, became his mistress. For that most criminal of all perfidies he paid the penalty of his life.”

Throughout this relation Lord William maintained a calmness, speaking slowly, and almost in a

whisper, which was more painful than the strongest outward emotion. Margaret crept to his side and trembled.

"You do not wonder now," said Lord William, recovering the firm tone of his voice, "why I have screened Mr. Winston?"

"And she?" inquired Margaret.

"I have never seen her since—I could not trust myself; but it has been the constant care of my life, of which she is happily ignorant, to watch over her security in another country."

"Then she still lives?"

"Come—you must not extract all my secrets. She is dead to me for ever."

The door opened, and Fletcher, looking alarmingly cadaverous in a full suit of mourning, announced Mr. Rawlings. Margaret's agitation at the name did not escape the notice of Lord William, who encouragingly pressed her hand, and went forward to receive the visitor, and spare her the pain of the first greeting.

A visible alteration had taken place in her father during the short interval that had elapsed since they had last met. His face had become much thinner and more pallid; the stony gaze, the indomitable resolution, the inflexible self-will, were displaced by

an expression of restlessness in the eyes and mouth, which at once betrayed great mental anxiety and shattered health. No longer imperturbable and self-possessed, he was nervous in his looks and motions, twitched with his hands, and spoke in a sharp, wiry voice, that grated on the ear with a sense of petulance and impatience.

A few formal words on both sides, and Mr. Rawlings took a chair beside his daughter.

"This is a heavy blow, Margaret," he said; "I had hoped that I had established you in a high and happy position. But it has fallen out otherwise."

"It might have been otherwise—we must submit to the will of Heaven."

"And all through the frantic folly of a disappointed boy——"

"Nothing can palliate his guilt—but it is better we should not speak about it."

"It proves, Margaret, that I was right not to entrust your happiness to such a man."

"Happiness! Oh do not let us speak about it. I am very weak and ill."

"She is hardly strong enough, Mr. Rawlings," interposed Lord William, "to bear this very painful conversation."

"I feel for her sufferings," returned Rawlings, "as keenly as your lordship, and am quite as unwilling to add to them by my presence—if that be a cause of pain to her. I am not to learn now, for the first time, that I am an unwelcome visitor in this house."

"No—no," exclaimed Margaret; "it was the shock at seeing you recalled these things—but that is over,—not unwelcome where I am!"

"You see, sir," said Lord William, quietly, "you have done us an injustice; and I fear you do yourself wrong in thinking so harshly sometimes of others. It is not a time for anger between us; and it is our duty to avoid all subjects that can increase the anguish of her situation."

Rawlings was slightly affected by the quiet feeling with which this was spoken. He did not expect this sort of reception from Lord William Eton, between whom and himself there had hitherto existed a feeling of undisguised asperity. A flush passed over his face, and he sat for a moment before he spoke, twitching his hands together, as if he wanted to suppress some strong emotion.

"True—true—it is not a time for anger. I had forgotten myself. If Margaret has reason to reproach me, she must remember that it was for what I be-

lieved to be her interest I acted. She must try to forgive me," he added, in a low, stifled voice.

"There is much to be forgiven on all sides," said Margaret; "and I reproach myself too bitterly not to forgive others."

"Reproach yourself!" repeated Lord William; "my dear Lady Charles, you must not use such a word. Your reproaches should fall upon us; although, for myself, had I been aware, as your father was, that your feelings were otherwise engaged, I never would have consented to your marriage."

"But, my lord," returned Rawlings, "had you been aware, as I was, that this violent young man had laid a plan to carry her off clandestinely, you would, probably, have acted as I did, and rescued her from the ruin which must have followed such a step."

"Whatever I might have done in such circumstances, Mr. Rawlings," replied Lord William, "I should certainly not have compelled her to marry against her inclinations. If we must speak of these matters, let us at least be honest."

Rawlings exhibited considerable impatience while Lord William was speaking, and when he had finished, he moved his chair back, and looked full upon him.

"When my daughter was married to your nephew, my lord," he began, "I was a prosperous man, followed and persecuted by a venal crowd of great people. They insisted upon setting me up for worship in their circles, and I determined to fix myself there, so that they could not shake me off when I had served their turn. This is the history of my daughter's marriage. It is something snatched from the hollowness and perfidy of the world—something for poverty to exult in, when it is oppressed by the pride and pageantry of rank. Why did they seek me? Let them read the moral in the consequences."

"There is some truth in that. When men of birth and station descend from their proper position, they deserve the humiliating results. But you are too sweeping in your censures. You must not judge of the aristocracy from exceptional cases."

"I judge of them," replied Rawlings, "from a wide experience, which has taught me that it is the besetting sin of their nature to prostrate themselves before this money-power. Let no man who rises from obscurity hope to bridge over with gold the gulf that divides him from them. If he be wise, he will keep in his own sphere. They use such men as

gamblers use cards, and fling them away when they have played out their game."

"I perfectly agree with you," returned Lord William; "the wise man, whether he is lord or commoner, will do best by keeping in his own sphere; and I who never flattered you, and who kept aloof, at the height of your prosperity, from an intercourse which was repugnant to my tastes and habits, may now say with regret and without offence, that it had been happier for us both if you had acted upon that conviction a little earlier. But it is useless to recur to the past. We have a more grateful task before us in making what reparation we can to *her*."

"I am bound, my lord," replied Rawlings, "to thank you for the consideration and kindness with which you have treated my daughter. The world has made me sceptical in my judgment of men, and my reliance on their truth; but I am not insensible to the dignity with which you have acted, and I am grateful for your generosity. There is one consolation left to me amidst the wreck of my own fortunes—that Margaret is secure. Let fate deal as it may with me hereafter, she at least is beyond the reach of reverses. That is a comfort to me."

"You may add, sir," said Margaret, "that she is

too sensible of what she owes to your bounty, not to share it with you in adversity. For myself, a very little will suffice, and I am too thankful that there is ample for us all. To feel that I can help you, will give me something to look forward to—something to live for.”

“No, Margaret,” replied Rawlings; “you have made sacrifices enough for me. I am not quite wrecked—there are resources yet at my command which, with thrift and industry, will enable me to preserve my independence. My head is clear and my resolution strong, and I will labour as a man like me ought to labour. I was born to that, and must look to it for succour. No—Margaret! I am proud of my child, and she shall hold her position unimpaired by any claims of mine. Experience is not lost upon me. We gather wisdom, my child, as we grow older; and the best use we can make of our misfortunes is to avoid the errors that produced them.”

As he spoke he became more calm and tranquil. The nervousness and irritation he betrayed at first had passed away; and the natural strength of his character returned, subdued in expression, and directed to a good and healthy purpose.

While this conversation was passing, one who had a deep interest in it was watching the windows from the square below. The same figure had for several nights appeared in the same place; and this was the first time that lights were visible in the drawing-room. Night after night the house was dark, and he who watched for some token of the life within, was hitherto doomed to be disappointed. But now the object of his vigil was attained. From time to time he noted the shadows that fell upon the picture-frames of those who were moving inside, and he concluded from their frequency that there were two or three persons in the room. This discovery seemed to throw him into perplexity, and he watched and waited as if he were undecided what course to take. At length, after many turns, he crossed over to the house, and rapidly ascending the steps, knocked at the door. It was presently opened—he went in—and, after a short parley in the hall, the door closed again.

Half an hour had elapsed after the visitor had entered the house, when Clara appeared in the drawing-room, in a state of evident alarm and agitation. There was an open note in her hand.

“You must not be frightened,” she whispered to

Margaret; "I have something to tell you—but you must promise to control yourself."

"You may trust me—I promise."

"Well—I have had a note from somebody."

"Somebody? Who?"

"Here it is—but you had better not read it now. I will tell you its contents."

"Yes——" said Margaret, taking the note, and looking at the handwriting, which she recognised at once to be that of Henry Winston. She trembled violently, and, in the effort to suppress the effect of the shock, her eyes dilated, and her lips and hands became rigidly clenched.

"Mad—he is mad!" she cried; "I believed he had left the country. Lord William thought so."

"No—he has taken no measures for his safety,—and will not—till—that is what he has written about."

"Till—what does he say?"

"In the letter he entreated me to see him for that purpose, and hoping it might spare you from something worse, I——"

"Worse?—oh! worse, indeed?" said Margaret; "still in England—he is infatuated!—he writes to see you?"

" I have seen him."

" You have seen him? Where?"

" Here——"

" In this house?"

" Be calm, for Heaven's sake! Yes, in this house——"

" When?"

" You must keep your promise with me, and control yourself. He brought the note himself."

" Himself!"

" Ah! Margaret, great as the sorrow is he has brought upon us, our sufferings are slight compared with his. He is dreadfully altered—I could not bear to look at him. Grief and repentance have broken him down; yet, much as I felt for him, I did not dare to give him any hope that you would grant the last request he will ever make to you in this world. I told him I would ask you."

" A request to me? Do not repeat it. Whatever it is, I will not hear it."

" I feared so—and told him so. But he would not receive the answer from me. He will take it only from yourself."

" When was this, Clara?"

" Now—this moment."

"To-night?"

"He is waiting in the next room."

"This is very cruel, Clara," she replied, looking round the room in alarm; "that he should come here under such circumstances—and Lord William here—and my father. He must go. To expect that I should see him—that we could ever meet again—it is too dreadful. Tell him to leave the house. I have no message to send. I will receive none from him. Why, why does he put me to this trial!"

"I will say only one word, Margaret; nor would I say it, but that my heart tells me I owe it to him. Through me all this misery came upon him—for my sake, you will let me say it."

"For your sake—anything, Clara."

"He has come here to ask your forgiveness. The penitent is not repulsed who seeks pardon of Heaven—you will not show less mercy to Henry Winston!"

"Clara, you will break my heart."

"No—it will be balm to it hereafter, to feel that you did not send him away in despair, with this heavy weight upon his soul. It will be a comfort to you to know that you have not doomed him to a

life abandoned of God and man. I implore you to grant this act of grace—for my sake, if not for his.”

It was a severe struggle of feeling with Margaret. She shrank in terror from the thought of meeting Henry Winston, with that recent scene of death still fresh before her; but Clara’s appeal was too affecting to be resisted. She knew the secret anguish that was in her mind, and how much she could alleviate it by making this last effort, and she relented.

“I will not see him alone. If it must be, Clara, it shall be here—in this room. *They* shall be the witnesses of our last interview.”

This was not exactly what Clara had anticipated; but she felt that Margaret was right.

“You will be shocked to hear,” said Margaret, while Clara was gone to prepare Henry Winston for the meeting, “that Mr. Winston desires to see me, and that, at my sister’s request, I have consented to admit him.”

“Mr. Winston!” exclaimed Lord William and Mr Rawlings together.

“He is here—in the house.”

“This is rashness, indeed,—the height of folly and recklessness,” exclaimed Lord William; “that

he should court destruction in this way, after the forbearance we have shown him. Very wrong and wicked—you must not ask me to be present.”

“I must entreat you not to leave the room. He can have nothing to say that you ought not to hear—and I shall need your support to sustain me through this final agony. I would gladly have avoided this—there is a grave between us, which his presence will re-open, but—that was his step! It struck upon my heart—do not leave me!”

She sank upon a sofa close to Lord William; and, as Henry Winston came into the room, she pressed her hands tightly over her eyes, until he began to speak, and then, as if the sound of his voice had loosened every nerve, suddenly let them drop, and gazed at him like a person who was spell-bound. He looked wan and haggard, and spoke in a thick, choking tone.

“I thank you for this mercy. My utter wretchedness has brought me here. I wanted to say to you what I hoped would be acceptable, if it would not give you pain to hear me speak—if you could bear to see me after what has happened. May I speak?” and he looked into the faces of the group, one by one, but they were all silent. Clara had

gone round to Margaret, and was leaning over her, clasping her hands.

"I had great and heavy provocation—I did not come to say that—I did not mean to say it; but there are those here who know how I was driven to desperation, and who seem to judge me relentlessly. I say it to them. No provocation can palliate my guilt to you—I have no justification to plead to you. That was what I had to say. I was told that it would be dangerous to come here, and warned that, if I valued my life, I should seek safety in flight."

"If you are prudent," said Lord William, slightly turning his head towards him, "it may not be too late yet."

"I understand you, my lord—I feel your kindness—doubly kind from *you*—and thank you for it. But of what value is life to me? I cannot go forth with her terrible silence on my heart. I came to ask one word of grace, to save me from myself, and enable me to bear the burden that is weighing me down. You will speak it—Margaret!"

His voice sank as he uttered her name, and he grasped a chair to support himself. Margaret buried her face in her hands, and a slight sob escaped her.

"I implore your forgiveness by the memory of

what has been between us," he continued,—“ the blighted hopes that have destroyed me. You will not send me from you in despair of mercy here and hereafter? That is all—I will try to live, if I may carry with me one blessed word of pardon. I had many things to say—you can comprehend them. You know what is in my thoughts—what I might have been—and what I am.”

He paused—Margaret was still silent.

“ Think of the time when life was innocent and full of hope for both of us; and if I am now criminal in your eyes, think of what it was that made me so. It is dreadful to meet you thus—but it will be an ease to you when I am gone to feel that you have given me a motive to drag out my life, that I may seek to make my peace with Heaven. Had you been happy, I could have borne my own wretchedness, but the knowledge that you were suffering too, was beyond my strength to bear. I struggled with it, but it mastered me. I ought to have fled from you—I had no right to linger near you, to think, to feel—I should have held your griefs sacred, and spared you this cruel trial; but my reason forsook me, and in a moment of frenzy I forgot what was due to you, and thought only of the love that was

desolated for ever, and the wrongs that smote upon my brain. No penitence can atone for that—but if remorse and sorrow and the life-long agony of a broken heart may look up to you for grace—Margaret! you will not send me hence in despair. Let me hear your voice—one word, Margaret!”

During this appeal Margaret made many efforts to look at Henry Winston, as if she wished to speak, but lacked the power, and towards the conclusion, he had drawn nearer to her, and at the close had fallen upon his knees beside the sofa. Lord William, and Mr. Rawlings, who could not conceal the agitation he felt throughout, had gathered round Margaret; and Clara, with imploring looks, was encouraging and urging her to speak. Margaret slowly raised her head, and looked from the one to the other, and then her eyes rested upon Henry Winston.

“What can I say? Pardon is in the hands of God!” she said, in a voice almost inaudible from strong emotion.

“Say, Margaret, that you accept my penitence, and in this world I will trouble you no more,” he exclaimed.

“I do—I do—” she replied; “I grieve for you

from my soul, and will pray to Heaven to send you peace and resignation. Remember, there are others who have claims upon you. For their sakes be careful of your life, and strive to look with hope to the future. I would not make your burden harder to bear—and it lightens mine to tell you this. Do not despair of mercy!”

The tone of affliction in which she spoke imparted a touching solemnity to these few words, that made them fall like a knell upon his ears. He felt that the hour of separation was come, and in the struggle to command himself his face became blanched and his limbs shook.

“I thank God I have heard your voice again! It will linger in my heart to my dying hour. I will obey you;—although it is little to live for others, it will be all to me that you have desired it. May Heaven protect and guard you—Margaret!”

He rose and hesitated—then went slowly towards the door, and turned again. Their eyes met for a moment—it was over.

POSTSCRIPT.

AND now nothing remains but to gather up the ends of our threads, and clip them off—for our work is done.

Richard Rawlings possessed that power of shaping and controlling circumstances which is inherent in a strong will and inexorable resolution; and, earnestly devoting his business talents to the practical objects he had marked out, he ultimately retrieved, not the position he had lost, but one which was more sequestered and secure. His mind was too energetic to lie idle, even if necessity had not called it into action. But he never became rich again. There were no golden miracles to be wrought through the pursuits in which he embarked; nor did his desires point in that direction, now that he had given up his schemes of ambition and social revenge. He had to begin an industrial career, in which everything depended on quiet perseverance, and in which the reputation of having a genius for creating wealth out of bubbles would have damaged rather than served him. He was glad enough to part with that dangerous *prestige*, and to address himself to small gains, procured by steady and

patient efforts. Thus his life was divided into two striking phases, the latter of which, less brilliant, and lying as it were in the shadow of his abdicated grandeur, was by far the more satisfactory. And by the time the great world had forgotten him, he had succeeded in discovering another world, a little lower down, which he grew on such good terms with as induced him to modify very materially his opinions of mankind.

To Mrs. Rawlings the change was a little uncomfortable at first. But she was of so plastic and accommodating a nature, that she soon reconciled herself to her new way of life. The character of her husband had become softened in the process, and as the sundry restraints dropped off of high life and domestic responsibility—the heaviest of which was that of balancing herself between opposing forces—she subsided insensibly into great caps and arm-chairs by the fire-side, maundering over the past as if it had been a dream which she was trying to unravel.

Within the ensuing year Clara and Mr. Farquhar were married—but not in the neighbourhood of Hanover-square. The family experiences were unfavourable to galantie-shows on such occasions. The ceremony was performed in the parish church of Hornsey, away from the din and uproar of the busy

town. The bride was profoundly happy. There could be no doubt of that. Yet, strange to say, she wept the whole time. Perhaps the scene recalled some memories which she would willingly have shut out at that moment. But there is no accounting for these curious inconsistencies in women, unless we may trace them to that wonderfully delicate and sensitive organisation which submits so gently to the severest trials, and which so often expresses its happiness in tears. There were few tears, however, in Clara's after life. Her true heart filled her home with light and joy.

There is a quiet parsonage-house in one of the romantic dells of Devonshire—one of those small dells where you are enclosed in a forest of myrtles and roses, and where you feel very much as if you were living in a flower-stand amongst geraniums; and in that parsonage-house lives Mrs. Pearce Upton. She is considerably changed since we used to meet her in the Wren's Nest; and at the first glance you would scarcely recognise the merry Rose Winston, in that staid, but sweet face, which looks out so calmly from under a cottage bonnet, meekly ornamented with a sad-coloured ribbon. Young clergymen's wives who have the care of parishes upon their benevolent little hands, as well as un-

ceasing claims to occupy them at home, to say nothing of lawns and flower-beds which they are expected to keep as trim and orderly as the rest of their duties, may be allowed to acquire an air of missionary serenity, without necessarily losing their original sunshine. Notwithstanding the repose of her manner, and the stillness of the smile which sits so patiently in her eyes, Rose Winston, if occasion called it out, could be as merry as ever. But then she has responsibilities in her position here which subdue her natural spirits—an example to set to others; a difficult card to play, on a limited stipend, with the proud county people; and two tiny Uptons, that engross all the leisure she can give to them; so that, after all, she has but scanty opportunities and few temptations to enjoy herself in the old light-hearted way.

Henry Winston, having gone abroad after his last interview with Margaret, and matters being cleared up between her and Rose, their old friendship was renewed, and kept up from time to time by an affectionate correspondence. Rose was, above all things, anxious to induce Margaret to pay her a visit in Devonshire. She was sure that change of scene would be beneficial to her, and she exhausted her descriptive powers in the charming pictures she drew of the neighbourhood, and the parsonage, and

the children—one of whom was called after her, and was asking about her every day, although its organ of speech was as yet so obscure that nobody else could understand what it said. Margaret resisted these solicitations as long as she could. She dreaded the meeting with Rose, and the revival of old subjects, which were equally painful to them both. But Rose was not to be denied, and urged her petition so perseveringly that Margaret at last consented.

In an intercourse, renewed under such circumstances, it is impossible to avoid that tendency to autobiographical disclosures which no sense of mutual distress can restrain confidential friends from indulging in. And, accordingly, although there was, at first, some timidity and embarrassment in approaching certain topics that lay in the recesses of their hearts, Rose and Margaret gradually overcame their reluctance to speak freely what they felt and thought, until at length, instead of being, as they apprehended, a source of anguish, it became a relief and a pleasure to them. The retirement of Devonshire tranquillised the bruised spirit, and Margaret began to take a new interest in life, reflected from the domestic peace of Rose and her little household. Month after month passed over, and, with the exception of an occasional visit to town, she still remained there. She felt herself happier there than

anywhere else. Rose had letters frequently from her brother, and sometimes communicated a part of their contents to Margaret; but the last letter she received—which was, indeed, only a few weeks ago—she kept to herself; for it announced the unexpected intelligence that Henry Winston was coming home.

A few hundred yards from the station of the branch which connects the town of Yarlton with the main line, stands a comfortable modern house on an open patch of ground, laid out in a raw, cheerful way, with a profusion of tall mallows and other gaudy flowers, such as we see in jaunty enclosures on the sloping margins of our iron highways. The interior is new and sprightly; too light in tone to be exactly what is called cozy, but warm, nevertheless, with a glow of spring over it, even in the depth of winter. It is just such a house as contractors run up, and hang with starry papers, for the residence of the superintendent, or other principal officer at the head station of a railroad. In this house reside Mr. Peabody and his wife. He looks like a well-fed man, with a lazy, shining face; while Mrs. Peabody is as thin as ever, with a carked visage, and a constitutional cough. One might suppose that, being so well to do in the world, she had become a

little mellowed by prosperity, and had by this time left off niggling and objecting; but John Peabody says it is her nature, and he ought to know. He has, however, very nearly carried one point against her, and whenever she begins to snap at him as she used to do when they were struggling in Trafalgar-row, he reminds her that she was wrong about the "bit of luck," and that she can't deny he dropped into it at last. To which observation, although it looks as final as if it closed up all avenues to an argument, true to her nature, she answers that "if it was a bit of luck, it's quite a providence how he has kept it so long!" But John is tolerably indifferent to these things now; for what with travelling up and down the line, and enjoying himself in an irregular locomotive life, that furnishes him with perpetual excuses for keeping out of the way of the raven that sits croaking at home, he contrives to be as happy as a man who pants for a Castle of Indolence, and can't get it, has any reasonable right to be.

Of Mr. Pogeey we are unable to give any information that can be safely relied upon. It was said that he went out with a batch of emigrants to New Zealand, where, he understood, they were greatly in want of medical men. But we hope the report

was unfounded; for, at his time of life, after having been so shattered by reverses, such an experiment must create some alarm amongst his friends—if he has any.

Mr. Costigan disappeared after the duel, and is supposed to be living upon his estate in Ireland, the securest retreat he could take refuge in, from the difficulty that has been hitherto experienced in finding out where it is.

Captain Scott Dingle, a sadder man, although, perhaps, not much the better from his experiences, haunts the streets towards nightfall, when he comes out to dinner, and usually devotes his evenings to a select circle of retired gentlemen, who have formed themselves into a sort of voluntary club at a small tavern in a narrow passage off the Strand. Here he meets a few congenial spirits, who, like himself, live in the past; and who sustain in each other, while their brief orgie lasts, that airy and pleasant spirit of enjoyment which, like all social fallacies, droops into misanthropy when they separate for their lonely chambers.

Mr. Sloake has been promised an appointment for Eugène in the Great Industrial Exhibition, and he is manfully subsisting upon it in advance.

Mrs. Stubbs is still living in Duke-street; but we are sorry to say that the apartments which were formerly occupied by Henry Winston are at this moment to be let. They are very snug rooms, and may be confidently recommended to the attention of any single gentleman who wishes for a comfortable home. We throw out this hint in pure good nature to Mrs. Stubbs; and we hope the Stamp Office, in consideration of our motive, will not come down upon us for advertisement duty.

And now, reader, we close our story. You have not found it very merry at the end, but remember that it is simply a picture of life as it is, and that life is chequered with rather more shadow than sunshine. And if it do not make us merrier, its purpose will be answered if it make us ever so little the wiser. Should you have discovered a few small truths scattered through it here and there, we shall be content; and if their quality be not always the most agreeable, we would remind you that truths, like other tonics, are not the less strengthening in their effects because they are sometimes rather bitter to the palate.

THE END.

50



VOYAGES AND TRAVELS.

- WAYSIDE PICTURES THROUGH FRANCE, BELGIUM, AND HOLLAND.** By ROBERT BELL. 1 vol., 8vo., 15s.
- THE CITIES AND WILDS OF ANDALUCIA.** By the HON. R. DUNDAS MURRAY. Second Edition. 2 vols., post 8vo., 21s.
- THE PILLARS OF HERCULES; OR, A NARRATIVE OF TRAVELS IN SPAIN AND MOROCCO.** By DAVID URQUHART, Esq., M.P. 2 vols., 8vo., 28s.
- PICTURES OF NUREMBERG; AND RAMBLES IN THE HILLS AND VALLEYS OF FRANCONIA.** By H. J. WHITLING. 2 vols., post 8vo., 21s.
- FOUR YEARS IN THE PACIFIC.** By Lieut. the Hon. FREDERICK WALPOLE, R.N. 2 vols., 8vo., 28s.
- NARRATIVE OF AN EXPEDITION TO THE DEAD SEA AND SOURCE OF THE JORDAN.** By Commander W. F. LYNCH, U.S.N. Royal 8vo., 21s.
- THE WESTERN WORLD; OR, TRAVELS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES IN 1847.** By ALEXANDER MACKAY. 3 vols., post 8vo., 31s. 6d.
- NARRATIVE OF AN EXPEDITION TO EXPLORE THE WHITE NILE.** From the German. By CHARLES O'REILLY. 2 vols., post 8vo., 21s.
- ITALY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.** By JAMES WHITESIDE, Q.C. Third Edition. 3 vols., 21s.
- FIELD SPORTS IN THE UNITED STATES AND BRITISH PROVINCES OF AMERICA.** By FRANK FORESTER. 2 vols., post, 21s.
- VICISSITUDES OF THE ETERNAL CITY.** By JAMES WHITESIDE, Q.C. Post 8vo., 12s. (Companion to "Italy in the Nineteenth Century.")
- REMINISCENCES OF PARIS, TOURS, AND ROUEN IN 1847.** A new edition of "The Parson, Pen, and Pencil." By the Rev. G. M. MUSGRAVE. 1 vol., 21s.
- NARRATIVE OF AN EXPEDITION TO THE NIGER IN 1841.** By Capt. W. ALLEN, R.N. 2 vols., 8vo., 32s.
- NARRATIVE OF AN EXPEDITION TO THE INTERIOR OF NEW HOLLAND.** Post 8vo., 2s. 6d.
- TWELVE YEARS' WANDERINGS IN THE BRITISH COLONIES.** By J. C. BYRNE. 2 vols., 8vo., 28s.
- A THREE YEARS' CRUISE IN THE MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL, FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.** By Lieutenant BARNARD, R.N. Post 8vo., 10s. 6d.
- RAMBLES IN THE ROMANTIC REGIONS OF THE HARTZ MOUNTAINS.** By HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN. Post 8vo., 10s. 6d.
- FIVE YEARS IN CHINA; INCLUDING AN ACCOUNT OF THE OCCUPATION OF BORNEO AND LABUAN.** By Lieut. F. E. FORBES, R.N. 1 vol., 8vo., 15s.
- SARAWAK: ITS INHABITANTS AND PRODUCTIONS.** By HUGH LOW. 8vo., 14s.
- A WALK ROUND MOUNT BLANC.** By the Rev. FRANCIS TRENCH. Post 8vo., 10s. 6d.
- TRAVELS IN THE GREAT DESERT OF SAHARA.** By JAMES RICHARDSON. 2 vols., 8vo., 30s.
-

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

VOYAGES AND TRAVELS.

- LETTERS FROM THE DANUBE. By the Author of "Gisella," &c.
2 vols., post 8vo., 21s.
- THE BUSHMAN; OR LIFE IN A NEW COLONY. By E. W. LANDOR.
8vo., 14s.
- RAMBLES IN SWEDEN AND GOTTLAND. By SYLVANUS. 8vo.,
14s.
- NOTES OF A RESIDENCE AT ROME IN 1847. By the Rev. M.
VICARY. Post 8vo., 5s.
- SWITZERLAND IN 1847. By T. MÜGGE. Translated by Mrs. PERCY
SINNETT. 2 vols., post 8vo., 21s.
- TRAVELS IN WESTERN AFRICA. By JOHN DUNCAN. 2 vols., post
8vo., 21s.
- ADVENTURES OF AN ANGLER IN CANADA. By CHARLES LANMAN.
Post 8vo., 10s. 6d.
- PADDIANA; OR, SKETCHES OF IRISH LIFE, PAST AND PRESENT. By
the Author of "The Hot-Water Cure." 2 vols., post 8vo., 21s.
- A CANOE VOYAGE TO THE SOURCES OF THE GREAT NORTH-
WESTERN TRIBUTARY OF THE MISSISSIPPI. By G. W. FEATHER-
STONHAUGH, F.R.S., F.G.S. 2 vols., 8vo., 28s.
- A PILGRIMAGE TO THE TEMPLES AND TOMBS OF EGYPT,
NUBIA, AND PALESTINE, IN 1845-1846. By Mrs. ROMER. 2 vols., 8vo.,
28s.
- A SUMMER RAMBLE TO THE RHONE, THE DARRO, AND
THE GUADALQUIVER, IN 1842. By Mrs. ROMER. 2 vols., post 8vo., 28s.
- LIFE IN THE WILDERNESS; OR, WANDERINGS IN SOUTH AFRICA.
By HENRY H. METHEUN, B.A. Post 8vo., 10s. 6d.
- A VISIT TO ALGERIA. By the Count St. MARIE. Post 8vo., 10s. 6d.
- SCENES AND ADVENTURES IN SPAIN. By Poco MAS. 2 vols.,
8vo., 28s.
- SCOTLAND: ITS FAITH AND ITS FEATURES. By the Rev. FRANCIS
TRENCH. 2 vols., post 8vo., 21s.
- TRAVELS OF THOMAS SIMPSON THE ARCTIC DISCOVERER.
By his Brother, ALEXANDER SIMPSON. 8vo., 14s.
- A PILGRIMAGE TO AUVERGNE, FROM PICARDY TO LE VELAY.
By Miss COSTELLO. 2 vols., 8vo., 28s.
- A SUMMER IN IRELAND IN 1846. By Mrs. FREDERICK WEST.
8vo., 10s. 6d.
- A PILGRIMAGE TO THE CITIES OF BOURGOS, VALLADOLID,
TOLEDO, AND SEVILLE. By NATHANIEL A. WELLS. Numerous fine
Engravings. 12s.
- FACTS AND FIGURES FROM ITALY; ADDRESSED DURING THE LAST
TWO WINTERS TO CHARLES DICKENS. Being an Appendix to his "Pictures."
By FATHER PROUT. Post 8vo., 10s. 6d.
- THE ADVENTURES OF A GUARDSMAN. By CHARLES COZENS.
Small 8vo., 5s.
- EXCURSIONS IN THE ABRUZZI. By the Hon. KEPPEL CRAVEN.
2 vols., 8vo., 21s.

RICHARD  LINGTON STREET.

